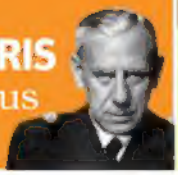
WWII

ADMIRAL CANARIS
Hitler's treacherous spook



WWI

LOOS, 1915
Slaughter in the slagheaps

CAMBODIAN CIVIL WAR

KILLING FIELDS
The madness of Pol Pot's Cambodia

MILITARY HISTORY

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January 2013 | Issue 28 | £3.95

MONTHLY

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PLUS

Theatres of war
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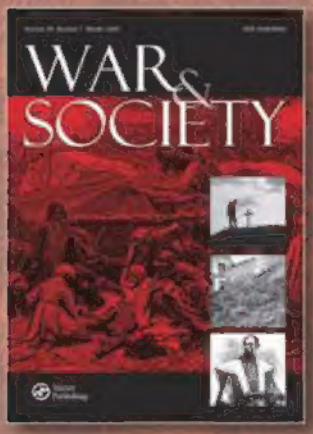

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ON THE COVER:
Edward III as he was portrayed in the 16th century, with the Battle of Crécy raging behind him.

Photo Alamy Images

Welcome

By Dr Neil Faulkner

What makes a great commander? What are the key qualities? How far is military achievement a matter of individual genius as opposed to context and circumstance? Does the general make the army, or the army the general?

These are questions we have begun to grapple with in our occasional series on great commanders. But we are deliberately choosing the more obscure. Enough has been written on men like Alexander, Caesar, and Napoleon. We are searching out some of the less famous, but nonetheless accomplished, exponents of the art of war.

Last month, we featured Helmuth von Moltke the Elder, architect of the modern German Army and German victory in the Austro-Prussian and Franco-Prussian Wars. This month, we feature Edward III, the Medieval monarch who forged a revolutionary military system that sounded the death-knell of feudalism.

The Medieval English system – dismounted action by 'bill and bow' in lethal combination – destroyed both Scottish pike phalanxes and French armoured chivalry during Edward's long military career. How much was this a matter of Edward's insight and genius, how much an expression of long-gestating changes in English society and war-making?

Our British Army series continues with the Battle of Loos, the most costly British offensive on the Western Front in 1915, and we also have articles this issue on Afghan gunrunning during the Raj, the enigmatic Nazi spymaster Admiral Canaris, and the military background to Pol Pot's Cambodia.

As usual, the aim is a broad range of articles covering a diversity of periods, places, and themes.

Neil Faulkner.

Who we are:

Military History Monthly aims to cover conflict on land, at sea, and in the air through all periods of history, with expert commentary written in an intelligent and accessible way.

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Let us know what you think...

We would love to hear your opinions on this issue of the magazine. What are your favourite bits? What should we cover next issue? You can give us your feedback:

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MILITARY HISTORY MONTHLY

Military History Monthly
Issue 28, January 2013
www.military-history.org

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SUBSCRIPTIONS
UK: £36.95 (12 issues) **RoW:** £46.95 (12 issues)
Back issues: £4.50 each / £5.50 non-UK (inc p&p)
Binders: (hold 12 copies) £15 / £20
Slip Cases: (hold 12 copies) £15 / £20

***Military History Monthly* Subscriptions**
Lamb House, Church Street, London, W4 2PD
Tel: 020 8819 5580 **Fax:** 020 8819 5589
subs@military-history.org
www.military-history.org/subscriptions

NEWS DISTRIBUTION
UK & Rest of World: COMAG, Tavistock Road, West Drayton, UB7 7QE **Tel:** 01895 444 055

Printed in England by William Gibbons
Military History Monthly (ISSN 2048-4100) is published monthly by Church Street Publishing Ltd, Lamb House, Church Street, London, W4 2PD

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DISPATCHES

Our round-up of this month's military history news stories.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
I greatly regret that I am unable to give you personally the award which you have so well earned. I now send it to you with my congratulations and my best wishes for your future happiness.
George R.I.
Royal Army Service Corps.

RARE BRAVERY MEDAL UP FOR AUCTION

A rare WWII George VI Bravery Medal is among a collection set to come under the hammer at Cuttlestones' Wolverhampton Auction Rooms. Grouped with a further five medals, a signed letter from the King, a company photograph signed by General Montgomery, this medal was awarded to a Sergeant of the Royal Army Service Corps, William John Tamms, who hailed from Staffordshire.

Sergeant Tamms' impressive war record included spells in the British North Africa campaigns under Montgomery and the invasion of Sicily and Italy, before he was drafted to serve in the Normandy D-Day landings; it was in this last campaign that his actions were officially recognised. Tamms' Bravery in the Field medal was awarded for saving a soldier from a burning ammunition truck while under enemy fire.

Wolverhampton Sale Room Manager Tom Waldron explains what makes this particular lot so fascinating: 'WWII George VI Bravery medals of this sort are very rare indeed – and this example will be of even greater significance to collectors given that Sergeant Tamms was from the Staffordshire area. However, it is other elements within the collection – such as the King's letter expressing his joint congratulations and regret that he could not award the medal to Sergeant Tamms in person, and the signed Montgomery company photograph – that really makes it stand out.

'It is not only a great piece of WWII memorabilia – it demonstrates how extraordinary people, from very ordinary backgrounds, helped change history and the fate of the world through their courageous actions. There are also WWII medal stars detailing the various campaigns Sergeant Tamms served in, and a winner's medal for the inter-unit knock-out soccer competition, played at Berlin's Olympic Stadium in 1946. The latter shows the effort to maintain some normality amid so much destruction. There will be collectors out there getting very excited about this lot!'

Sergeant Tamms' story is sure to catch the eye of many medal collectors – and local-history buffs – when the collection comes up for auction at Wolverhampton Auction Rooms Specialist Collectors' sale. The lot carries a guide price of £800-£1,200.

For further information, visit *www.cuttlestones.co.uk* or call 01902 421985.

The pigeon message mystery

Today they are the filthy feathered inhabitants of London's Trafalgar Square. But during World War II, over 250,000 pigeons were on active service with the British Army. They were used to send messages back to the front from behind enemy lines, and flew with bomber pilots to deliver the bad news in the event of a crash.

Each bird was given a number, and records were created to keep track of their missions. Many birds, however, never made it home. One such pigeon, the remains of which were recently discovered amid the rubbish in the chimney of David Martin's home in Bletchingley, Surrey, has sparked a code-breaking race that is still stumping the boffins.

While restoring his chimney, Mr Martin happened upon the skeletal leg of a pigeon, affixed to which was a red capsule containing a cryptic message written on thin paper. Although the identification number on the pigeon's metal band is not recognised, the red capsule is typical of the type used by the SOE.

What is unusual about this particular message is that it is written in code. While pigeon-borne messages usually contained clear and concise information, this particular pigeon seems to have been charged with transporting a secret message to, it is thought, the code-breakers at Bletchley Park. Only a dozen or so pigeons were stationed at Bletchley, and their cargo was most often of a sensitive nature.

Colin Hall of the Bletchley Park Pigeon Exhibition remarked that all the messages he and his team have looked at in the past have been written longhand, but this is the first message to be brought to his attention that is in code. 'I knew there was something special about this one,' he noted.

The message is currently being worked on at the modern-day equivalent of Bletchley Park: GCHQ in Cheltenham. Written by a Sergeant W Stot, the message has remained a mystery for 70 years. It is hoped that today's top code-breakers will soon be able to decipher the sergeant's cryptic missive.

NEWS IN BRIEF

CENTENARY PUSH UNDER WAY

David Cameron has announced funding of £5 million for the new First World War galleries at London's Imperial War Museum in a speech outlining national plans to commemorate the First World War Centenary.

The ground-breaking galleries will open at IWM London in summer 2014, part of a transformation of the museum, and central to the IWM's plans to mark the centenary. These immersive and interactive new spaces will draw on the latest historical analysis of the war in telling the stories of those who lived, contributed, fought, and died during the conflict, as well as enabling the museum to display more of its exceptional collections.

PRINCESS ALEXANDRA ANOINTS

Princess Alexandra was recently invited to the 'topping out' ceremony of the new Royal Star & Garter Home in Surbiton. The Princess was met by Vice-Admiral Sir John Dunt, Chairman of Governors, and Councillor Mary Heathcote, Mayoress of Kingston-upon-Thames.

Princess Alexandra, who is the president of the charity, was invited to carry out the traditional Saxon ritual of anointing a yew-tree branch attached to the building's 'last roof beam' with wine, oil, corn, and salt, symbolising wisdom, liberty, prosperity, and hospitality.

The home will provide specialist nursing care for 37 residents, and specialist dementia care for a further 26 residents.

RECCE ON THE WRECKS

The Hampshire & Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology (HWTMA) has received initial support from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the 'Forgotten Wrecks of World War I: remembering and commemorating through archaeology' project. This project aims to raise public awareness of the maritime aspect of the Great War through the discovery, exploration, and promotion of wreck remains hidden within and around the waters of southern England. The project will gather information from archaeological sites and historic records to enhance understanding of the WWI wreck resource.

Development funding of £44,800 has also been awarded to help the HWTMA make progress towards applying for a full grant at a later date.

HAVE YOUR SAY

Send your thoughts on issues raised in *Military History Monthly* to:

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IN MONTY'S DEFENCE...

I was disappointed to read the article on Monty in the November edition, in that it slavishly repeats the personal opinion of one particular historian with little new evidence.

You say that Monty inherited Auchinleck's plan and claimed it was his own. As a graduate of both Sandhurst and The Army Staff College, I can say no general would automatically take on a predecessor's plan without he and his staff carrying out a new and thorough appreciation of the situation. The fact that both plans were similar as a result of this was no doubt due to the fact that it was the best course open.

One major factor in the success at Alamein was the restoration of morale which had reached rock-bottom under Auchinleck. Monty can take a great deal of the credit for the restoration of the Army's morale. Having been a member of the Royal British Legion and the REA, I have had the opportunity over the years to talk to old 8th Army veterans, all of whom said how low morale was before Monty's arrival. Without exception they said how they admired and respected him. Not a bad achievement in such a short time.

I agree that Monty was arrogant, vain, and self-promoting, but so were many famous commanders, including, I should say, Marlborough and Napoleon. He was also more than just a 'competent general': his handling of the 3rd Division during the fighting withdrawal to Dunkirk was more than just competent. I was at Sandhurst not long after Correlli Barnett's book was first published and it promoted a great deal of discussion. On one occasion we were privileged to receive a talk from General O'Connor. On being questioned about Monty, he was generous in his praise and he wasn't just being polite.

On Churchill's dismissal of Auchinleck, you refer to his 'amateur military experience'. Churchill was a professional soldier, having graduated from Sandhurst and taken part in many campaigns including WWI as a battalion commander, which was more than any of his generals in WWII had done. It can also be said that Churchill's decision was not taken in isolation: he had a small, influential war cabinet which was in close contact in all decisions with the chiefs of staff on such matters.

It is true that Monty had a huge ego, but it was the ego of a successful commander and largely forgiven by those who admired his battlefield prowess.

Michael Fawcett
Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne, France

A FARCICAL ARRANGEMENT

I cannot comment on Montgomery's ability as a commander, but I can offer this little anecdote.

My grandfather was a member of the team that was responsible for Montgomery's safety and he disliked him, in comparison to the other Top Brass he came into contact with.

He described how Montgomery would expect to be saluted on every occasion he passed a subordinate, as opposed to most others who were content to be saluted on the first meeting of the day only (unless in the presence of others of rank or the public etc). He said this could lead to the farcical situation whereby Montgomery would exit a room and be met by a salute, only to realise he'd forgotten something and go back, and would expect to be saluted again only seconds later.

Mick Hilton
Mansfield

MONS WAS MISSED

The article under this heading ('Mons, 1914', *MHM* 27) is a gallop through some of the military developments prior to WWI, plus some stuff about the (lack of) impact of early aerial reconnaissance. Left at that it would have been an OK article. But there is quite literally no discussion whatever of the Battle of Mons! A few lines on Walter Boehm's company being mown down by rifle-fire does not contribute anything, other than as a demonstration of the British Regular Army's expertise in that area.

What is important is who fought the battle, why, and what is the basis of it being called a 'tactical victory' i.e. what did it achieve in order to be considered as such? And what did the British Army learn from it – this series is, after all, a 'History of the British Army in 25 Battles'.

As for Mons being a 'pointless battle', I cannot quarrel with the judgement since there is no argument presented to support it. Whether or not the Battle of Mons 'could not affect the strategic outcome' is also contentious. This would imply that there was absolutely no outcome that might have had a strategic impact and that the British/French High Command knew this at the time. Both of these issues go back to why it was fought in the first place, which is not addressed!

To compound things, under 'Mons, 1914: Retreat from Victory' on the cover there is a photograph taken at the Somme or Passchendaele, I forget which, but in any case it reflects a totally different war to that being fought at Mons.

Military History Monthly is an excellent publication, but in this case far more editorial rigour was called for.

Terry Russell
UK

CONCEITED, BUT NO CONMAN

To infer Montgomery was a 'charlatan' is close to being offensive. He may have been conceited, but he was not a mountebank. It is an epithet better suited to a bonus-seeking banker than to a man who did his duty, evidently to the satisfaction of men of calibre and intellect that may even have exceeded that of Barnett – Alexander and Alanbrooke to name but two.

Jim Pratt
Peeblesshire

PANZER-FALSE

I was pleased to read in the November issue of your magazine about Duxford's land warfare hall: having been a few years back, it has inspired me to go again. However, I did notice a mistake in Keith Robinson's article. He mentions, in the World War II section, 'figures from the 12th SS Division *Hitlerjugend*, one of whom carries a *Panzerfaust*, the German equivalent of a bazooka.'

The mistake being the *Panzerfaust* was not the German equivalent of the bazooka, the *Faust* was, in fact, a one-shot anti-tank weapon. The bazooka was intended to fire multiple shots. During the war the Germans captured many M1A1 bazookas in North Africa and some in Russia on the Eastern Front. This allowed them to design a bigger version of it, using an 88mm round which could penetrate almost any Allied armour. This was called the *Panzershreck*. Both turned out to be very effective.

Still, this doesn't detract from a very informative piece on a lovely museum.

Kevin Baker
Gravesend

'GRANDPA WAS NOT A NAZI'

The human touch: stories of war and conflict witnessed by *MHM* readers.

Melanie Wimmer is a journalism graduate from the University of Kent with an interest in modern history.

Left One of the last people who can remember living under Hitler's rule, Elli Dziubinski, shown here at the age of 12.

PART 1 *Germany, 1939-1945*

In the first of a two-part 'Your Military History' special, Melanie Wimmer takes a critical look at the last testimonies of the Third Reich.

'In the morning we had to form a line in the big hotel and they looked into our ears and inspected our fingernails. We had to go outside and do the Hitler salute, singing National Socialist songs, while the flag was flown, whether it was raining or not. Our arms nearly fell off, and we hated those girls of the League of German Girls, who supervised us.'

Elli Dziubinski was born in Berlin in 1928. Today she is one of the last people who can remember what it was really like to live under Hitler.

The memory of the WWII generation is fading and will soon be lost forever, as witnesses have reached the end of their days. Now is the time to get a grip on these first-hand accounts before we are left with only the archives. They let us experience history through the eyes of those who lived it, giving us the opportunity to better understand their generation, and add to the research on social identity.

Even if memories are false, distorted, or self-justifying, the need to record them has never been more urgent. In 2010, the population figure of the WWII generation, born between 1921 and 1940, was about 12 million. But the death rate is increasing every year. For the year 1921, for example, the death rate rose from around 1% to 14% between 1980 and 2010.

Fading memories

Due to old age, fewer and fewer witnesses are capable of sharing their experiences. Furthermore, collective trauma and illnesses such as dementia are destroying their memories. Whereas Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) usually declines in old age, in Germany and other countries with a WWII history, the rates are twice as high as with younger generations.

'A sign of PTSD is often an attitude of avoidance of experiences, and a memory bias cannot be ruled out,' said Tobias Glück from the Psychology Institute of the University of Zurich. Many German families have never talked about their memories of the Nazi period, ignoring or repressing them, and are about to take their last testimony to the grave. Furthermore, fading memories and experiences are mixed with what they know now, and some only recall isolated episodes. 'The memories are their personal truth. History is rewritten according to the needs of the present,' said Dr Daniel Siemens, a lecturer in modern German history at University College London.

For the majority of Germans, 'Grandpa was not a Nazi'. This is the title of Harald Welzer's book, which concludes that in eye-witnesses' stories of the Nazi past, the emphasis is often on their own suffering, especially bombing and starvation. They rarely talk about responsibility. Contemporary witnesses feel under pressure to justify themselves to the post-war generation when conversation turns to knowledge of concentration camps or war crimes. They know that they did not oppose the Nazi regime and therefore became complicit in the policy towards the Jews.

The rise of anti-semitism

After Adolf Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany on 30 January 1933, anti-Jewish policies were introduced and Nazi propaganda singled out the Jews as public enemies. The year 1938 saw a radical ratcheting-up of anti-semitic activity. During the *Kristallnacht*, the so-called 'Night of Broken Glass', on the night of 9/10 November, there was a wave of attacks against Jews throughout Germany and Austria. As the first large-scale violence, it is often considered to be the start of the Holocaust.

Elli Dziubinski was 10 years old and remembered the date well: 'My brother Fritz should have been part of the action. He received an order from the Hitler Youth to report at a square in

Right Germans pass by the smashed windows of a Jewish-owned shop in the aftermath of *Kristallnacht*.
Above A young Anni Krimmer from rural Dachau. She still remembers when Jewish shops and businesses were closed down without explanation.

the city centre in the early hours of the morning and told our father to wake him up at 5am. But our parents knew something could not be right and did not wake him. My brother was quite angry about this when he realised it in the morning.

'But then we saw what had happened when we went out onto the streets. The Jewish stores along the shopping street, including the butcher next to us, were all demolished and the streets were covered in shards of glass. My father said: "This is what it would have been like if you had gone with them." My brother would have had to do it on order of the Hitler Youth, even though he was only 15 years old.'

Aryanisation

The regime then seized property from Jewish citizens and denied them employment in favour of non-Jews, so-called 'Aryans'. This economic marginalisation of the Jewish population was explained in the 'Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service' of 7 April 1933. The 'Aryan paragraph' dismissed civil servants and employees of the Jewish ethnicity from the public service.

Consequently, many companies advertised themselves as a 'German business' or a 'Christian company' through newspaper advertisements, signs, and public statements. Such information, visible to everyone, was a protection against discrimination, for instance defamatory labels or signs, which might damage the business.

The Nazi regime justified the seizure of Jewish businesses on both economic and racial grounds. All property, they claimed, served as 'national wealth' of the national community. With the adoption of the Nuremberg Laws in September 1935, Jews were by definition no longer part of the community and lost the entitlement to their assets. By that time, nearly a quarter of all Jewish business-owners had already been dispossessed.

Günter Kilsch, now 85 years of age, recalls. 'I experienced how they broke Hermann Tietz's store windows in the middle of the city centre. I am sure he was a nice businessman and thought about the poor as well, but Hermann Tietz was a Jew.'

Anni Krimmer, from a small village in the rural district of Dachau, remembered. 'My father had a Jewish leather supplier, who was such a nice man. He brought leather for shoes to wear to our Holy Communion – even though he was a Jew. If my father didn't have any money, it was okay too, and he didn't have to pay any interest. And his wife was always very nice. She sent us pretty little boxes and things we liked. Then his shop closed and we went shopping at an Aryan store. We didn't really think about what had happened.'

The start of the war

On 1 September 1939, Germany invaded Poland. Two days later, Britain and France declared war on Germany, honouring their guarantee of Poland's borders.

Marianne Ritter's father was a wealthy doctor and she recalled clearly: 'My dad was a great fan of cars and in 1938 he bought a Mercedes cabriolet. My parents, my two brothers and I drove to Hamburg to see my aunt and uncle, but while we were there, the war started. On the way back, lorries with soldiers passed us. My father could not get any petrol from the service station and asked for it at the pharmacies so we could get home.

'As we came home in the nice car, which my father had only driven for one year, the military immediately confiscated the tyres. It was therefore in the garage for all the years of war, but for us children it was great to play inside. We were always allowed to sit in it and were hoping that when the war is over we would have our tyres back. But towards the end of the war, the German military came again and fled to Austria with our pretty car. That was the end of our car.'

The SS

In June 1936, Heinrich Himmler, the *Reichsführer* of the *Schutzstaffel* (SS), had become Chief of German Police. Together with the police, the SS, which was originally set up as personal protection for Hitler and other party leaders, was the main instrument of the *Führer*'s will.

Willi Zimmerling, now 90 years of age, was one of the policemen. Today he lives in a house built under Hitler in Sitterswald, a town at the border with France, which was ▷

Top Heinrich Himmler, Chief of German Police, inspects a PoW camp. **Above** Willi Zimmerling, here seen boxing, was a member of Himmler's feared SS. He recalls how vague his superiors' instructions were right up until the moment orders were to be carried out. Under Himmler's command, ordinary policemen were turned into criminals.

once called 'Hitler's village', as it was designed to show what the German Reich was doing for its people.

'At school we were asked what we wanted to be in the future and I always wanted to become a policeman. Every year there was a sports day, and at 12 years of age I was the best one. When I was 17, this athletic talent secured me a job with the police, as they only took the best men. My dream had come true

'Exactly one year later, on 1 September 1939, the war started and we were sent to the Polish border. Not knowing that there was war, we asked the police captain what we were supposed to do there. "At 3am I am allowed to open the letter. At 3am I will read it to you. I do not know what it says," he told us. Then he read out that we should blow up the Gedingen–Warsaw railway line.

'When we were at the railway line, a train, on its way to Warsaw, approached but turned back when they saw what was happening. Polish civilians fled from the train into the forest, while I was standing on the bridge with the order to shoot, but because of the rain my machine-gun didn't work.

'Then it was said Himmler, *Reichsführer* of the SS and Chief of German Police, would take command of us. Those in the SS were criminals and we were selected people. But under his command, we were criminals too, and if we had come into Russian captivity they would have killed us immediately. We had to remove our badges and wear the SS uniform. When I came home in my SS uniform, as I was wounded, my father said: "What kind of uniform are you wearing? The war is lost."'

Evacuation

From October 1940, schoolchildren and mothers with small children were relocated from cities, which were under the threat of air attacks, to less vulnerable areas. The aim of the *Kinderlandverschickung* (KLV), the evacuation of children to the countryside, was not, however, only the protection of children from bombs. Far away from home and church influence, they were to be re-educated as National Socialists. Between 1940 and 1945, approximately two million children were sent away.

One was Elli Dziubinski. The 12-year-old girl lived in Berlin, a target of frequent air-raids, and was sent to the Sudetenland (in what became Czechoslovakia) with her whole class

'We were living in a hotel, which had been confiscated by the Nazis, and I shared a room with two girls. The food was good and we didn't notice the war. Our teacher was almost like a mother and we went to her if we had any problems, because she always consoled us. Of course I was homesick, even though my parents sent me a lot of letters and visited me in 1941 to encourage me.'

She was holding a photograph of her cousins in the uniforms of the League of German Girls in her hand and suddenly began to smile whimsically: 'Especially at Christmas, when every girl was sent pretty clothes from back home, we loathed that the two girls from the League of German Girls wanted to make us wear the uniforms. But then we simply cut off the uniform's buttons, because for us it was a Christian celebration and on this special day we didn't want to sing Hitler songs.'

Raids in the countryside

In times of air-raids, fear replaced the children's feelings of joy when playing in the woods and fields in the countryside, as low-flying planes were a great danger.

Marianne Ritter remembered: 'As soon as the sirens wailed at night it was time to get up, put on something warm over our pyjamas, and go into the basement. As I was mad about playing with my dolls, my doll's pram had to come with us to the basement. It was a horrible experience and we always feared that something was going to happen.

'I remember we had a maid, who never went into the basement. She always said she was going to stay upstairs. But our maid was lucky, unlike one of the neighbours, who did not go into the basement, looked out the window, and was shot by a low-flying plane.'

She thought of the day when she was sitting on a bench at Lake Constance, looking across to Switzerland: 'During the bomb attacks everything had to be blacked out, so the

cities were dark and nowhere was light. But in Switzerland everything was lit up and there was peace. I couldn't understand that as a child. It was unimaginable for me that in Switzerland, such a short distance away, there was a totally different world, without bomb attacks, without fear, and with lights. And where we were, on the other side of the lake, everything was dark, because we always had to fear that bombs were going to drop somewhere.'

Hitler Youth

'Youth must be led by youth' was the movement's slogan, but the reality was different. In fact, every young leader was subordinated to a more senior leader – up to the *Reichsjugendfuhrung*, who was directly accountable to Hitler himself. Ultimately, everyone served the *Führer*.

From March 1939, it was compulsory to join the Hitler Youth. If parents did not register their children to the Hitler Youth, they were fined or arrested. But this rarely happened, as children wanted to be in the youth movement, whereas their parents were often less enthusiastic.

'I promise to do my duty in the Hitler Youth in love and fidelity to the *Fuhrer* and to our flag' was the vow of allegiance on entry into the Hitler Youth.

Günter Kilsch, now 85, remembered, 'I was part of the Hitler Youth and we learned everything there – the Morse code, fishing, or how to ride a motorbike. Every week we drove to different places and played these games, where the opponents were on the top of the hill and the attackers at the bottom. It was all fixated on Hitler.

Below 'Youth must be led by youth.' A Hitler Youth recruitment poster from the German Federal Archive.

Above Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories Alfred Rosenberg is welcomed to Riga in Latvia by members of the League of German Girls (*Bund Deutscher Mädel*).

'But I focused on learning the Morse code, which was my area of expertise. What they said didn't really interest me. I was more interested in the technology and how it works, and it fascinated me how there was a new code every day.

'I had already been brought up as an opponent of the Nazi regime by my grandfather. So what they told me in the Hitler Youth went in one ear and out the other. But I had to join the youth movement, because if you refused, your cards were marked.'

League of German Girls

For most girls, the League of German Girls (*Bund Deutscher Mädel*, BDM) was socially, culturally, and emotionally attractive. As the female branch of the Hitler Youth, it offered the young female generation in Germany the opportunity to lead a self-determined life outside their parental home and school, and take part in society.

Anni Krummer enjoyed the activities of the BDM: 'It was always really nice. Once a week we did gymnastics, which I had always wanted to do, but there was only a gymnastics club for men. It was said that a women's squad will be set up soon but it wasn't set up.

'And we engaged in cultural activities as well. I still remember that a few times, when the weather was really nice, we sat down on some steps and knitted while Mrs Jaeger read *Gulliver's Travels* to us. We didn't have books in those days, but she borrowed them from someone. Those were things we only got to know during our time in the community.

'We always used to sing songs as well, and we sung them with utmost fervency and didn't think anything of it. "We broke the fright. It was a grand victory. We will march on when everything is falling into ruins because today we own Germany and tomorrow the whole world." I think we didn't even comprehend its meaning.'

Children in the Third Reich did not think about politics or the meaning of the youth movements. For them it was a great opportunity to play, sing, dance, and have fun.

Next month's issue will look at education during the Nazi era, the image of Hitler as a benefactor, and the witnesses' claim 'We did not know'.

EDWARD III

England's MEDIEVAL WARRIOR-KING

Marking the 700th anniversary of his birth, **Stephen Roberts** looks at the military achievements of King Edward III in the second of our great commanders series.

Edward III was born on 13 November 1312 at Windsor in Berkshire, and assumed the throne at the tender age of 14 after his father's deposition and murder (the tradition was that the former Edward II had a red-hot poker stuffed up his backside in a Berkeley Castle dungeon).

The new king quickly showed an inner steel, however, as he turned the tables on his father's tormentor, Roger Mortimer, arresting him in his bedchamber at Nottingham Castle and dispatching him to the Tower for execution.

Among his many achievements was his acceptance of Parliament, which he made as representative as he could, the House of Commons coming into existence for the first time. The alliance between strong monarch and middle classes which was to be so fundamental to subsequent English history began in the reign of Edward III. This alliance was both political and military, and the king is remembered above all for his battlefield innovations and triumphs.

A new way of war

Edward's army was a mix of old and new, the traditional feudal host combined with modern volunteer service. It was a fully professional organisation, with all ranks being paid. Edward's eldest son, Edward the Black Prince, was paid twenty shillings a day. Cheshire archers and Flintshire spearmen from Wales were paid two pence a day.

Devastating military tactics were developed, centred on units of longbowmen flanking armoured infantry equipped with spears and bills. These new tactics enabled the 'humble' archer to prove his military value and doomed to eventual extinction the chivalrous code of knightly warfare in Europe.

The high demands of skill and strength required in proficiency in the use of the longbow led various English monarchs to issue instructions encouraging the ownership of and practice with the weapon. In 1363, Edward III proclaimed: 'Whereas the people of our realm, rich and poor alike, were accustomed formerly in their games to practise archery, whence by God's help, it is well known that high honour and profit came to our realm, and no small advantage to ourselves in our warlike enterprises, that every man in the same country, if he be able-bodied, shall, upon holidays, make use, in his games, of bows and arrows, and so learn and practise archery.'

The range of the Medieval longbow is not accurately known, though it has been suggested that a professional archer of Edward III's army might have had a maximum range of up to 400 yards; a typical operational maximum for a unit of longbowmen – the range at which significant damage might begin to be done – was perhaps 300 yards.

The longbow was the machine-gun of the Middle Ages – accurate, deadly, possessed of a long range and rapid rate of fire, and with the flight of its missiles being likened to a storm. Its weight of shot was much higher than that of its principal Western European rival, the crossbow. Superior weapons and tactics meant that service in the English army was relatively safe (as well as profitable), as we can divine from the respective casualty figures from the battles fought in Edward's reign.

An old social order

Alongside revolutionary innovations, however, was a continuing conservatism. Though the army was now professional, ▷

Left An English warship of the Hundred Years War, packed with soldiers. Edward III was a master of war on land and sea. The long conflict between England and France opened with a Medieval Trafalgar: the destruction of the French fleet at the Battle of Sluys in 1340. Edward was his own Nelson. **Below** King Edward III (1327-1377).

Above French crossbowman, as depicted in a contemporary book illustration. Crossbows did not require the same level of skill and practice to operate as longbows, but their rate of fire was only a fraction of that of the longbow.

Right English longbowmen, as depicted in the same illustration. The longbow was a fast, accurate, long-range weapon that far outclassed in killing-power both crossbows and early handguns.

it was still organised in a way that reflected England's traditional social structure.

Career officers commanded smaller units, but larger formations were still in the hands of nobles. Promotion did not depend solely on military competence. Edward did promote low-born captains who had distinguished themselves, but only those who had acquired wealth and set themselves up as landed proprietors would be granted significant commands.

The 14th-century army, so innovatory in many ways, remained a delicate balance between change and stability.

Edward's motives in waging war reflected England's still essentially feudal character. What was new was the king's canny ability to unite his people behind him in wars against the enemy 'without'. His attentions turned first of all to Scotland, his initial job being to clear northern England of Scots raiders.

The Scots had been making constant and often devastating raids on the northern counties of England. Rather than fight the Scots, the regency regime of Isabella (Edward III's mother) and Mortimer had signed the Treaty of Northampton in 1328, giving up all claim to Scotland in return for Scots agreement not to invade England.

Once Edward had assumed control, he sought an excuse to turn the tables on the Scots. A civil war between the Scots barons led to Edward Balliol seizing the crown and agreeing to pay homage to the English king in return for his support. Crucially, the border city of Berwick was also returned to the English.

The Siege of Berwick
MAY-JULY 1333

Supporters of the young David Bruce (son of King Robert Bruce), led by his guardian, Archibald Douglas, quickly dethroned Balliol and invaded the north of England, capturing Berwick. Edward III now had the excuse he needed to strike back at the Scots, without fear of being accused of breaking the Treaty of Northampton. Edward resolved to invade Scotland and restore Balliol as his 'puppet' king.

> The English army used the trebuchet to fling the severed heads of dead soldiers over the walls of the fortress.

At the end of May 1333, new siege engines arrived by ship at Berwick, where the armies of Edward III and Edward Balliol, the nominal king of Scotland, had determined on breaking down the walls of the town being defended by Scottish 'rebels'.

Edward III's intentions in besieging Berwick were twofold. He wanted to recapture this strategically important border city, but he also wanted to draw a large Scottish army into open battle, as he was confident of winning any such engagement.

Once Berwick was surrounded, the Scots tried an old ruse of raiding deep into English territory to draw the besiegers off. This time, it merely provided Edward III with some very useful propaganda about Scottish atrocities, which were embellished to portray the Scots as bloodthirsty barbarians and so encourage the Borderers into an alliance with Edward. The English king may have lacked modern means of communication, but he had nothing to learn by way of

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technique. Public proclamations and petitions to the clergy were all used to emphasise the righteousness of retaliation.

The siege was traumatic. Although the defenders of Berwick resisted stoutly, they were hammered by missiles from land and harassed by the English fleet from the sea. One of the most powerful weapons used was the 'trebuchet', a type of catapult that flung multiple stone balls from a canvas or leather sling. The English army also used it to fling the severed heads of dead soldiers over the walls of the fortress to spread disease: a crude form of bacteriological warfare.

Seeking decisive battle

Finally the 'rebels' appealed for a truce and were offered terms by the English king on 15 July. He dictated that if, in four days, a Scots army had not defeated him, nor a Scots relief force broken through, the city must surrender.

This might have seemed like a favourable deal to the defenders of Berwick, as they knew that Douglas and a large army had for some time been raiding the neighbouring countryside, attempting to draw off the besieging army. Berwick's defenders were even allowed to inform Douglas of the truce terms.

During an earlier truce, Edward had taken a dozen hostages and he now showed his determination to end the siege by threatening to kill these hostages. To show he was serious, Edward erected high gallows as close to the walls of Berwick as was safe and duly hanged the first of the hostages. This was the act of a ruthless, calculating military leader, prepared to abide by the conventions of the day but also willing to push them to their absolute extremity.

On the morning of 19 July 1333, just one day before the deadline for Berwick's surrender, the Scots army drew up three miles north-west of the city. Before it was arrayed the English army. Edward had got his battle.

The Battle of Halidon Hill
19 JULY 1333

Edward III had secured the advantage of a strong position on Halidon Hill. It rises two miles north-west of Berwick and commands long views in all directions, except to the north, where Witches' Knowe, the initial Scottish position, stands in the way.

On the slopes of Witches' Knowe, the Scots were also well placed for a defensive battle. This, however, was no advantage now, for they were obliged to attack or accept the loss of Berwick.

Ahead of the Scots lay an inhospitable area of boggy land, which would render their horses useless. They waited until ▷

Below A Medieval trebuchet in action against the walls of a castle.

LIFE AND CAREER

EDWARD III

1312	• Edward born at Windsor Castle, Berkshire
1325	• Edward created Earl of Aquitaine and sent to France to perform homage to French King
1327	• Edward II forced to relinquish throne to his son • Coronation of Edward III, aged 14
1328	• Edward married Philippa of Hainault • Treaty of Edinburgh signed by Scots and ratified in Northampton by English • Edward II murdered in Berkeley Castle
1330	• Philippa of Hainault crowned Queen of England • Birth of Edward's first son, the Black Prince • Edward captures *de facto* ruler Roger Mortimer at Nottingham Castle • Mortimer executed and Edward III's personal reign begins
1332	• Free access of merchants to ports and towns, provided by Magna Carta, confirmed • Battle of Dupplin Moor
1333	• Siege of Berwick • Battle of Halidon Hill (after which Edward Balliol pays Edward III homage)
1336	• Count of Flanders forbids trade with England
1337	• Philip VI confiscates English King's Duchy of Aquitaine and the County of Ponthieu • Edward declares himself rightful heir to French throne and declares war on France
1340	• Truce signed with Scots • Edward makes diplomatic journey to meet German emperor Louis
1340	• Battle of Sluys
1346	• Battle of Crécy • Siege of Calais commences

Above The Scots assault on the English position on Halidon Hill on 19 July 1333. The Scots had no choice but to attack, since their mission was to relieve the besieged city of Berwick, but this obliged their densely packed ranks of spearmen to advance uphill into a murderous arrow-storm.

Below Drawing based on a contemporary image of the Battle of Sluys. Medieval naval battles were essentially like land battles except on floating platforms: rival ships closed, grappled, and then opposing crews struggled for dominance in fierce hand-to-hand fighting. Ships were hardly ever sunk: the defeated either fled or were captured.

midday, then prepared to advance, on foot, uphill, through a treacherous marsh.

The sizes of the respective armies are unknown, but it is believed that the Scots were more numerous, possibly 14,000 men against 10,000. But the Scots army, made up predominantly of spearmen formed into dense 'schiltrons', would prove frighteningly vulnerable to Edward's waiting longbowmen.

The Scots trudged towards the English king's well-drilled army and into a storm of English arrows, 'as thick as motes on the sun beam' according to an English chronicler.

Hundreds of Scots would have fallen before the ragged and dispirited force was able to come to grips with the English on Halidon Hill. As the two armies came to blows, the English formations – fresh, intact, with the ground in their favour – simply threw back each Scots onslaught. The attackers fought desperately but without any real chance of success, and eventually the Scots line broke, on the right, ironically on the flank where it faced the troops of Balliol, the pro-English puppet king. As the schiltrons wavered, Edward III gave the order to mount, and the English knights harried the fleeing enemy with lance, sword, and mace.

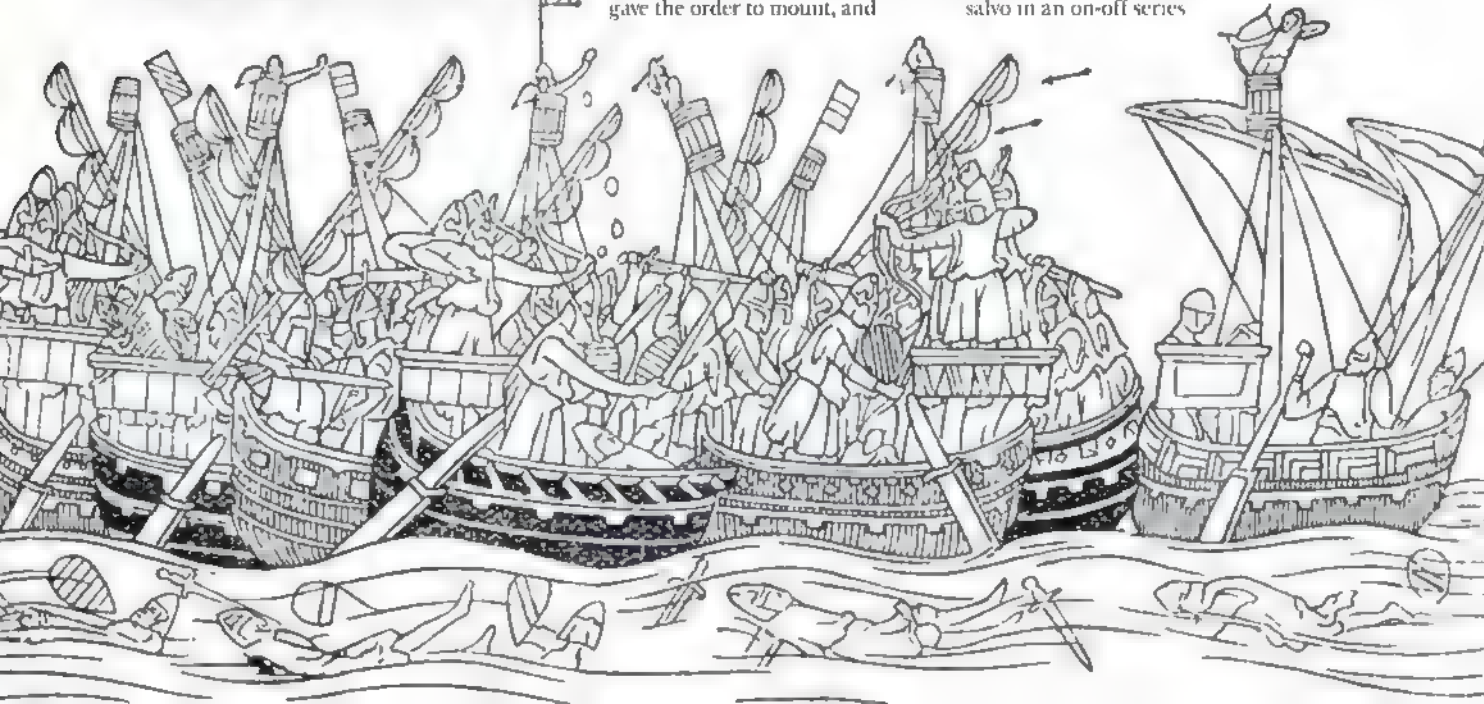
The Scots grooms, attending their masters' horses on Witches' Knowe a mile to the north, witnessed the disaster ahead of them and rode off in panic, leaving the floundering Scots chivalry to an almost certain death. The pursuit, as was often the case, lasted until nightfall and continued for mile upon merciless mile. There may be exaggerations at play, but Scottish historians estimated that 10,000 Scots died that day, including Douglas and 70 Scottish lords, plus 500 knights. English historians could find fewer than 20 casualties on their side.

At only 20 years old, Edward III had shown himself a master tactician, using 'bill and bow' in perfect combination, and keeping his horse in reserve to capitalise upon success. He was also displaying the ruthlessness characteristic of all great commanders.

On 20 July 1333, King Edward accepted his prize by riding through the gates of Berwick. The English singers of ballads were able to celebrate his victory and their country's revenge for the humiliation of Bannockburn: 'Scottes out of Berwick and out of Aberdeen / At the Burn of Bannock ye were far too keen./King Edward has avenged it now, and fully too I ween.'

The Hundred Years War

With the Scots subdued Edward now proclaimed himself rightful heir to the French throne and declared war on France. This was to be the opening salvo in an on-off series



Above A vivid reconstruction of a Medieval naval battle. The English had two main advantages at Sluys: first, they manoeuvred and struck the French flank, such that force was concentrated; and second, their longbowmen were highly effective in sweeping the enemy decks as the opposing ships closed.

of campaigns, treaties, and stand-offs that would go down in history as 'the Hundred Years War'.

Edward made the bold assertion that 'our progenitors, Kings of England, were lords of the English sea, on every side' – the historical origin of 'Britannia Rules the Waves'.

The idea was to recover the English king's possessions in France, even though these were a throwback to a time when England had actually been itself a possession of an empire based in Normandy. Such details were forgotten as patriotic feeling generated a momentum to war.

If there was any doubt about Edward's personal military prowess, this was dispelled by his offer of single combat to the French king at the start of the War, a challenge which failed to elicit a response.

The decade 1340-1350 was to be a time of great military success for England. A string of victories started with the destruction of the French fleet at Sluys in 1340, and then continued with a land war starting in July 1346.

The Battle of Sluys
24 JUNE 1340

The Battle of Sluys was the Trafalgar of its day: it resulted in the destruction of the French fleet and wrecked any possibility of a French invasion. It ensured that the war henceforward would be fought on land in France.

The encounter took place in front of the town of Newmarket or Sluis (French *Ecluse*), on the inlet between West Flanders and Zeeland. A French fleet, which the English king, in a letter to his son, the Black Prince, put at 190 sail, had been collected in preparation for an invasion of England. Although many English historians speak of King Edward's fleet as inferior in number to the French, it is certain that he sailed from the Orwell on 22 June with 200 sail. His admiral for the North Sea, Sir Robert Morley, then joined him on the coast of Flanders with 50 more.

Edward anchored at Blankenberge on the afternoon of 23 June and sent three squires to observe the position of the French. The dispositions of the French were made in accordance with the usual Medieval tactics of a fleet fighting on the defensive, with three or four lines chained together, with a few of the largest ships stationed in front as outposts. This was disastrous, as it ▷

LIFE AND CAREER
EDWARD III

- Battle of Neville's Cross (capture of the Scots King David II)

1347
- Calais surrenders

1348
- Order of the Garter created
- Black Death hits England
- King Edward loses his 15-year-old daughter Joanna to plague

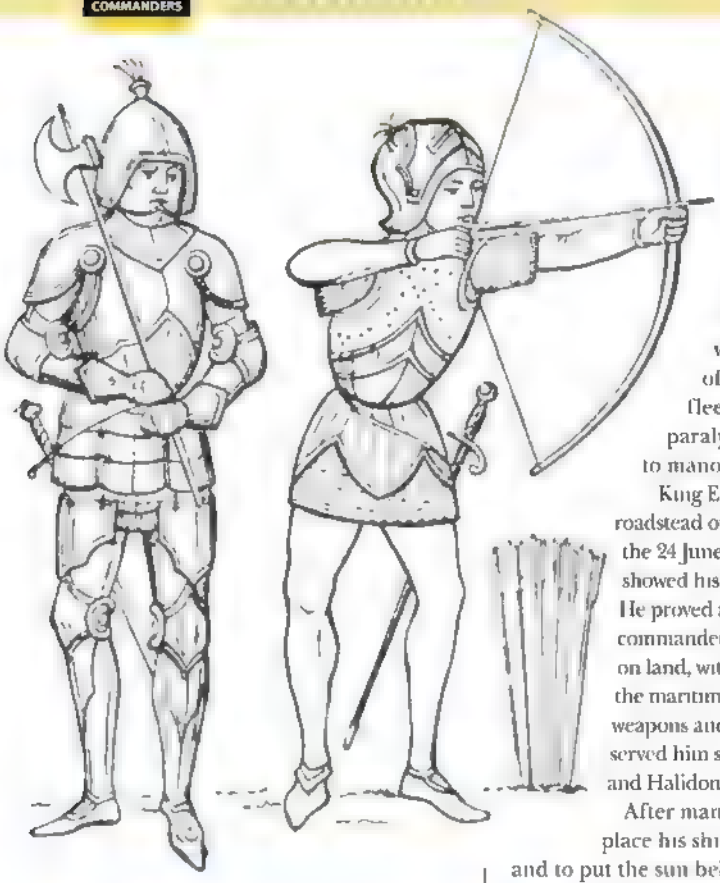
1350
- Victory over Spanish fleet, who lose 14 ships out of 40

1351
- Statute of Labourers

1356
- Battle of Poitiers (French King John II captured)

1357
- Scots king released under promise of ransom

1360
- Treaty of Bretigny (Edward renounces claims to French throne, but secures extended French possessions)
- Treaty of Bretigny ratified as Treaty of Calais. French king released, but returns to captivity when ransom not raised



Left An English archer and a dismounted man-at-arms. The combination of the two – 'bill and bow' – was the secret of the astonishing string of battlefield victories won by English armies in the 14th century.

allowed the English to attack the left flank while the rest of the French fleet was effectively paralysed and unable to manoeuvre.

King Edward entered the roadstead on the morning of the 24 June and immediately showed his tactical nous. He proved as capable a commander at sea as he was on land, with a keen grasp of the maritime potential of the weapons and tactics that had served him so well at Berwick and Halidon Hill.

After manoeuvring to place his ships to windward and to put the sun behind him, he attacked with showers of arrows from the longbowmen on board his ships. They could fire five times faster than the Genoese crossbowmen aboard the French ships, and as a consequence caused as much havoc among the enemy here as they had previously among the Scots schiltrons.

The battle lasted for a day and a night. It seems likely that the English fleet, deployed in two lines, used the first line to launch a frontal attack and the second to mount a flank attack. The battle soon became a long succession of hand-to-hand fighting, boarding, and the repelling of boarders. The fierceness of the engagement is indicated by the fact that the English king himself was wounded at some point by either an arrow or a crossbow bolt. This was very much 'leading from the front'.

By the end of the battle, the French fleet had been broken, with only two English ships captured, and the water was reported to be thick with blood and corpses. English losses have been estimated at several thousand, but these were far exceeded by the French, thought to be anywhere between 16,000 and 20,000 men. Virtually all the French ships were captured.

Edward III's legacy

English use of longbows proved effective against the French for much of the Hundred Years War, particularly at its start, with English victories at the Battles of Crécy (1346) and Poitiers (1356), but also, most famously at Agincourt in 1415.

It was also responsible for further victories over the Scots, notably at Neville's Cross in the same year as Crécy. This victory allowed Edward to remain in France and lay siege to Calais in September. After a year-long blockade, the city, with its huge double walls, finally surrendered.

At sea, too, Edward III's English were destined to win further victories. In 1350 the king rounded off a successful decade by sailing his fleet out of Sandwich and defeating a force of Spanish galleys off Winchelsea.

Edward's later years were not as commanding as his early ones. His reign was marked by international setbacks and domestic strife, largely as a result of the king's inactivity and bad health. He was predeceased by his wife, Philippa of Hainault, who died in 1369, and then in 1376 by his eldest son, the Black Prince, who died after a long-lasting illness.

The king played only a limited role in the government of his realm after 1375. Around 29 September 1376, he fell ill with a large abscess. After a brief period of recovery in February 1377, he then died of a stroke at Sheen on 21 June. His ten-year-old grandson, King Richard II, son of the Black Prince, succeeded him.

Edward III restored royal authority and transformed England into one of the foremost military powers in Europe. He brought the tactics of combining large blocks of longbowmen with supporting blocks of dismounted men-at-arms to a new level, exploiting to the full the military potential inherent in England's distinctive and evolving Medieval social structure. He was also a master of surprise and subterfuge, and of propaganda and spin.

LIFE AND CAREER

EDWARD III

1363	• Edward III's declaration on learning and practice of archery
1364	• John II of France dies in captivity
1369	• French war resumes • Death of Edward's wife, Philippa of Hainault
1370	• Sack of Limoges
1375	• Treaty of Bruges (English possessions are reduced to Calais, Bordeaux, and Bayonne) • Edward plays limited role in government
1376	• Good Parliament • Death of Edward's eldest son, the Black Prince
1377	• Edward dies at Sheen Palace, Richmond, and is buried in Westminster Abbey

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stephen Roberts is a history graduate and former history teacher who is now a freelance writer. He is a regular contributor to *MHM*'s War Zone series.

Give more families their loved ones back this Christmas

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MILITARY TROUPES ENTERTAIN THE TROOPS, 1914-1918

Larry Collins looks at the function of theatre entertainment during the First World War, and its role as unofficial recruiter, propagandist, and fund-raiser.

Theatrical diversion amid the carnage of the First World War was not just a relief from the arduous task of combat and the monotony of routine between battles. It had a therapeutic and recuperative effect – a recreational function, as well as being a reminder of home and another life.

The men, left to their own devices, improvised and organised in-house entertainment on a sort of two-tier system. Entertainment at brigade and regimental level was *ad hoc* in nature. At the higher divisional level, theatre productions, given the unusual circumstances of war, were remarkably sophisticated.

AD HOC ENTERTAINMENT

During any lull in the fighting, the troops would amuse themselves. If circumstances allowed, sing-songs with accompaniment on rough, home-made devices would take place. Many wrote home requesting mouth-organs, as these were the most transportable musical instruments. In the first year of the war, 7,675 mouth-organs were dispatched abroad.

The usual location for entertainment was at depots and rest camps in the rear, but there was always the YMCA canteen hut situated a short distance behind the front-line trenches. At one end of the hut stood the ubiquitous piano, which was intended as an aid to the singing of hymns at church services – but it was not always light airs or hymns for which it provided accompaniment!

The battalion canteen shows varied in quality. They included crude comedians as well as singers. They were often organised, wrote a reporter, by 'some grey-haired old member of the permanent staff' who had a walrus moustache and 'probably sported ribbons of the Zulu campaign and the Boer War'. He had the unenviable task of acting as Master of Ceremonies at these boisterous and bawdy entertainments.

Top The Central Stores Troupe, made up of soldiers from the tank corps. **Above** A female impersonator *artiste* applies his make-up in 1917.

THE DIVISION CONCERT PARTY

The division concert parties were altogether more sophisticated affairs. The divisional concert troupe drew men from different regiments and corps, and was judged to be of such importance that its provision became a statutory requirement in some base camps.

Photos: © IWM; Alamy

The staple diet of all concerts was songs, especially those in which the troops could join in the chorus. The soldiers needed to laugh and sing as a release from trench life and the stench of death. Edmund Blunden, referring to the well-known song 'Take Me Back to Dear Old Blighty', described the scene of collective emotional escape:

The barn roof ought to have floated away on the paeans and warbling that rose from us... we roared manely, and when a creditable cardboard train was jerked across the stage and performers looking out of the windows sang their chorus 'Birmingham, Leeds, or Manchester', the forces of illusion could no further go.

The females in the audience, the nurses and VADs, because of the decorum expected of them, would pretend to be embarrassed by some of the crude allusions and references made by the comedians and singers.

There were times, however, when the collective rendering of a song could be deeply moving. At one reported concert, the pianist began to play and the men to sing 'The Long, Long Trail' in a quiet and reflective mood. The first few lines of the chorus are:

There's a long, long trail a-winding
Into the land of my dreams,
Where the nightingales are singing,
And the white moon beams...

The sentiments and the atmosphere could make even the most war-hardened nurse's throat constrict: 'it cut you to the heart', wrote Dorothy Nicol, a VAD, in July 1917. This was during the Third Battle of Ypres, which lasted until the Allies took Passchendaele in November. Allied losses amounted to 240,000.

THE ENTERTAINERS

Most of the division concert parties mirrored the Pierrot troupes that performed in the music halls and at the end-of-pier shows. The standard dress of ruffles and skull cap was thus a common feature of military concert parties. Many of the troupes were run by ex-pros and it was they who, through their connections, obtained costumes and props.

The assembling of a cast was a constant problem, and it was difficult to maintain a permanent theatre company due to the movement of battalions and the ever-increasing casualty list. The losses were not always attributable to the enemy: on one occasion the concert party producer was relieved to hear that the baritone had been released from 'clink' in time to do the show.

At division level, auditions were held. Musicians, singers, and comedians were not too hard to find, although the quality varied. But the show-stopper was always the female impersonator. So when a young Highland Light Infantry soldier, who had worked professionally as a female impersonator, turned up for audition, he immediately became part of the concert party.

A problem arose when his division had to move and the remaining division wanted to retain him, as he was the star of the show. The latter, in order to keep the impersonator, offered to exchange 'her' for 'two radial machine-gun mountings'. The offer was rejected, so they kidnapped the performer. This caused considerable enmity between the two divisional commanders, a problem finally resolved when the army commander was invited to a show. It was pointed out to the high-ranking guests that the young Highlander was of more use entertaining the troops; they agreed and he was transferred.

Theatre productions followed the British tradition, so at Christmas there were pantomimes. The panto, with its melodramatic characters, its heroes, and its victims provided the script-writers with ample opportunity to adapt the dialogue to fit the times. The seating capacity was usually around 400, and houses were always full. It was not unusual to have to turn people away because the 'theatre' was packed hours before 'curtain up'.

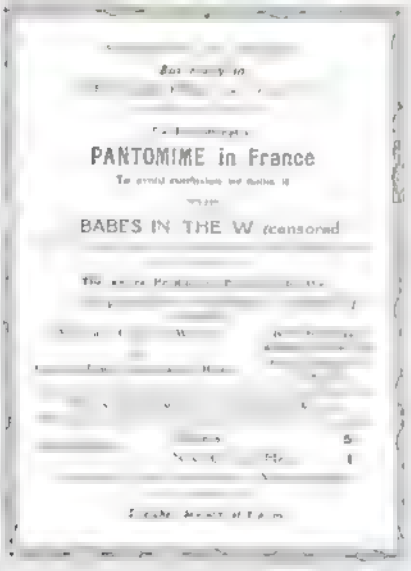
THE IMPORTANCE OF RECREATION

Prior to 1918, all personnel involved in concert-party production were fighting men. The proliferation of concert parties underlined the importance of theatre entertainment. There was a growing awareness among the authorities of the importance of recreation, and the part it played in the convalescent process, both for the physically injured and the battle-weary serviceman. The obvious next step was to form a theatre company whose specific task was entertaining the fighting troops. In 1918, Leslie Henson – the musical comedy artist – was employed to form such a company.

In Lille in 1918, following the German evacuation, Leslie Henson and his concert party located the opera house and made it suitable for production. The show was attended by the British army commander and the mayor; prior to this, the local population vowed not to go to the theatre until enemy troops had been driven from the town.

The show was reminiscent of a masque with patriotic scenes. At the finale, the stage lights went up to reveal 100 children who began to sing the 'Marseillaise'. 'The audience stood in awed silence,' recounted Henson. The final effect was the distant heralding of the Scottish pipes from three floors below the stage; as the pipe band got nearer and the music louder, the audience erupted. The performance marked the coming armistice.

By 1917, each division had at least one military theatre company. The concert parties filled a variety of functions. The inclusion of some sketches clearly gave the troops a platform on which their grievances about food, conditions, sergeants, and officers were aired: they provided a safety-valve for a shared and sympathetic grumble. The theatre could aid recovery, claimed the doctors, and it brought some colour into the lives of the troops and reminded them of home.



Top An engraving from the Italian newspaper *La Domenica del Corriere* showing artists from the London variety theatre entertaining British troops in France, 3 January 1915. **Above** A programme for a troupe production of *Babes in the W (censored)* in 1915.

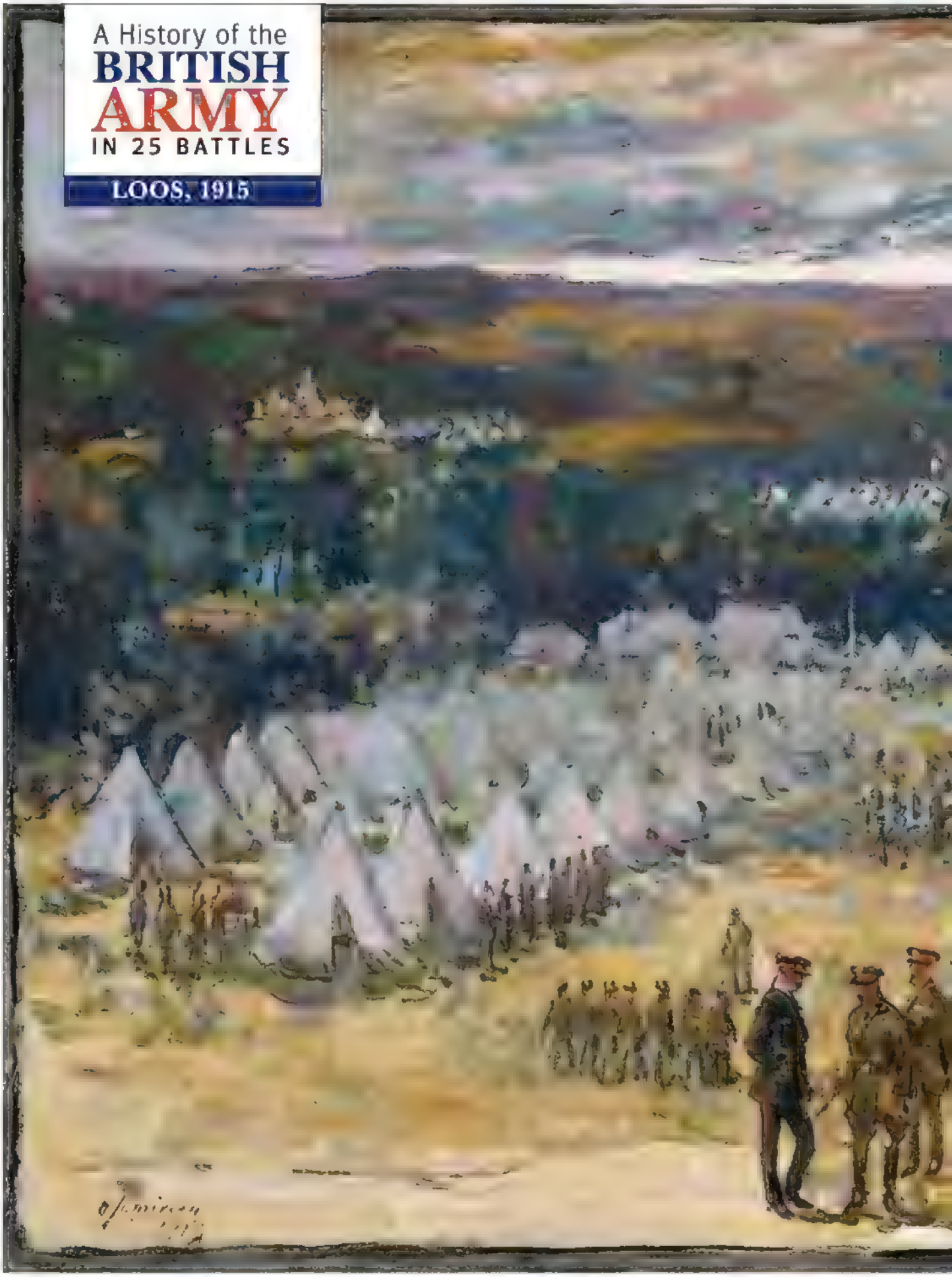
...uthor of Theatre at War 1914-18 (Hale Publishing, £13.95).

A History of the

BRITISH ARMY

IN 25 BATTLES

LOOS, 1915



LOOS, 1915

Lambs to the slaughter? Field-Marshal Lord Kitchener inspects the 10th battalion of the York and Lancaster Regiment in camp at Halton in 1914. A wave of patriotic enthusiasm and mass enlistment greeted the outbreak of war. The Battle of Loos did much to turn that mood into grim resignation and growing resentment.

Right General Sir Douglas Haig (1861-1928), the commander of the BEF's First Army at Loos.

LOOS

25 SEPTEMBER-14 OCTOBER 1915

Loos was the culmination of a year of costly failure as the British improvised a mass army, created modern munitions factories, and discovered the grim realities of industrialised warfare.

The war had lasted for more than a year. The campaign of mass and manoeuvre in late summer 1914 had turned into a campaign of mass and stalemate in 1915. The numbers of men and weight of guns in the line had created an immobile front 400 miles long. The opposing belts of trenches and barbed-wire were so wide, the open ground of no-man's-land so comprehensively raked by artillery and machine-guns, that attacks were no sooner launched than decimated by fire and sealed off by enemy reinforcements.

The universal problem that attacks lose momentum as they progress was writ large on the Western Front. The increasing extent and depth of trench systems meant that ever heavier and more numerous guns and ever greater quantities of shells were required to suppress enemy defences before attacks went in.

Once they began, if attacking infantry were at all successful, they quickly outran their artillery support, since the guns, relatively immobile to start with, became more so as battlefields were transformed into 'close terrain' by earthworks, obstacles, shell-holes, and mud.

With relatively primitive battlefield communications, moreover, forward elements were soon beyond effective command-and-control. Radios did not exist, telephone lines were easily cut, and messengers risked being cut down by the storm of steel on the surface if they exposed themselves.

As advanced units became invisible on a largely 'empty battlefield', they tended to become isolated and cut off, their lines of resupply and reinforcement rearwards blocked by enemy firepower. Isolated and pinned down, with cohesion and co-ordination breaking down, with casualties mounting, ammunition running low, and exhaustion setting in, they became vulnerable to counterattack deep inside the enemy trench system.

Much then hinged on the reserves. If they came up fast, if they got across the open ground relatively unscathed, if they were directed to the weakest parts of the enemy line, they might pass through the first wave and renew the momentum of the offensive. But this hardly ever happened. The usual pattern was that, once initial surprise and impetus had been lost, attacking units found the advantage passing to the enemies massing in the trenches all around them. Break-ins were easily contained and never developed into break-throughs.

The imperative of the offensive

These grim realities took time to sink in. They clashed with the politico-strategic obligation on the Allies to attack. The

Images: WPL

Left Marshal Joffre (1852-1931), the French commander-in-chief, an irrepressible optimist, and a firm advocate of the offensive. His insistent voice drowned out British reservations about attacking the German line.

Right Field-Marshal Lord Kitchener (1850-1916), a British military hero, since August 1914 Secretary of State for War, and an intelligent man with a realistic assessment of the strength of German defences on the Western Front. But he was to be swayed by the imperative demands of the wartime alliance with France.

Attacks were no sooner launched than decimated by fire and sealed off by enemy reinforcements.

Germans had occupied a large chunk of northern France. It was sufficient for them to hold their ground, strengthen their defences, and use their possession of enemy territory either as a launch-pad for a renewed lunge at Paris or at the very least as a strong basis for entering peace negotiations if the stalemate could not be broken.

The French were bound to try to evict the intruders. They therefore launched a succession of offensives during 1915, each equally ineffective, each at immense cost. During the year, the French lost almost 1.5 million men killed, wounded, and captured.

France could not endure such losses indefinitely. They still had 3 million men in the line at the end of the year, but their manpower reserves were not limitless, and nor was the endurance of the humble *poilu* – a fact recognised by the German high command when they decided to launch a full-scale offensive at Verdun early the following year in a ferocious effort to bleed France to death.

The pressure on Britain – political and military – to increase its commitment to the Western Front therefore steadily mounted. France could not defeat Germany on its own. Quite possibly, without strong support, its army would crack at some point and the road to Paris lie open. The traditional preference of the British for a 'blue-water' strategy – the use of naval power to blockade and harass a European enemy while leaving most of the land fighting to Continental allies – was untenable. Britain had to improvise a mass army and bring its full weight to bear on the Western Front if the war was to be won.

Kitchener of Khartoum

Though most imagined that the war would be over in a matter of months, some, notably Lord Kitchener, who was appointed Secretary of State for War and brought into the British cabinet as soon as war broke out, thought it would last for years. Kitchener immediately set about creating the mass armies he believed Britain would need. As so often in its history, Britain found itself improvising the means to wage war at the eleventh hour.

Kitchener was a strange mixture of imposing presence and deep-rooted insecurity. He disliked politics, teamwork, and delegation: he was essentially a one-man band who ideally wished to be his own staff officer and intelligence chief.

He was sometimes possessed of great insight when all about him were losing their heads. His prediction that the war would last at least three years was one example. So was his gloomy assessment of the murderous and hopeless nature of the fighting on the Western Front.

Unlike the French commander-in-chief, the jovial, ever-optimistic *bon vieux* 'Papa' Joffre, Kitchener had no illusions about a sudden, stunning, war-winning breakthrough. He explained: 'Joffre and Sir John [French] told me in November that they were going to push the Germans back over the frontier; they gave me the same assurances in December, March, and May. What have they done? The attacks are very costly and end in nothing.'

In particular, in Kitchener's view, if the French could not do it, what hope was there that the under-strength, under-gunned, under-supplied BEF would be able to: 'The French have an almost unlimited supply of ammunition and 14 divisions in reserve, so if they cannot get through, we may take it as proved that the lines cannot be forced.'

But for all the Olympian gravitas of his pronouncements, Kitchener was riddled with inner doubts. These expressed themselves in an alarming tendency to sudden swings from one point of view to another.

To attack or not to attack?

His sense that the Western Front had the form of a gigantic siege, where the attackers faced impregnable defences, caused him to give rein to 'Easterners' like Winston Churchill and Lloyd George who argued for using the Navy to project military power to secondary theatres with the aim of 'knocking away the props' of Imperial Germany and finding new, less well-defended avenues of advance into the heartlands of the Central Powers.

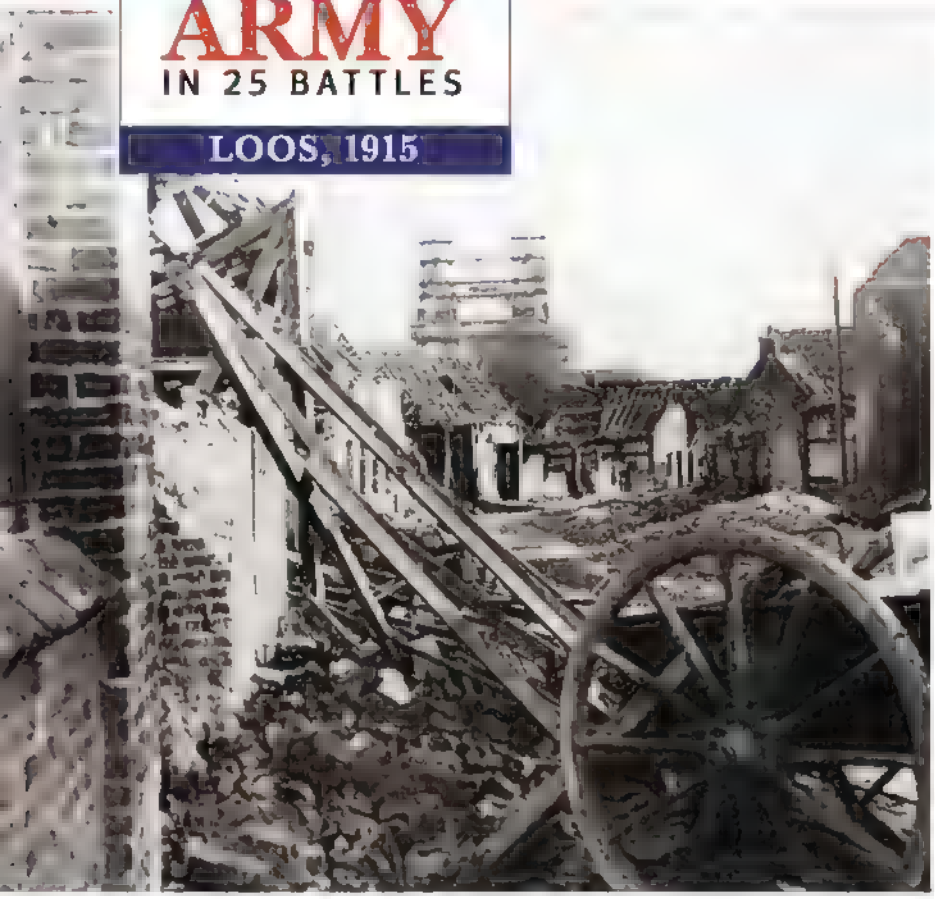
'The German lines in France,' intoned Kitchener, 'may be looked on as a fortress that cannot be carried by assault and also cannot be completely invested.' It followed from this that 'the lines [in France] may be held by an investing force, whilst operations proceed elsewhere'.

But when the Gallipoli campaign degenerated into a hopeless repetition of trench stalemate, Kitchener swung back to a 'Westerner' perspective. Eager to support Joffre, anxious about French ▷

Below The men who fought at Loos. The nine divisions incorporated a combination of Regular, Territorial, and New Army battalions. They represented an army in transition from small-scale 19th-century warfare to industrialised total war.

A History of the
BRITISH ARMY
IN 25 BATTLES

LOOS, 1915



Above The Loos battlefield was a bleak industrial landscape of pit-head gear, monstrous slag-heaps, and miners' cottages. The Germans had turned these features into a defensive complex, much of it hidden from British lines, and generally with commanding views over open ground to the west.

war-weariness, unable to see any other way forward, he laid his well-founded doubts to rest and gave his backing to a joint Allied offensive on the Western Front in autumn 1915.

Douglas Haig, commander of the British 1st Army, was ordered to prepare for an attack in the Loos sector. The grand plan was for the French to attack in Champagne in the south and the British and French in Artois in the north, the two thrusts designed to break through and pinch out the giant German salient that projected threateningly towards Paris. The British were to form the left-wing of the northern pincer.

Haig did not like it. Smaller-scale attacks with limited objectives earlier in the year had achieved nothing of note at great cost. The Battle of Neuve Chapelle in March had cost the British 13,000 casualties in three days. The Battle of Aubers Ridge in May had cost 12,000 casualties in a single day, that of Festubert a week later a further 17,000.

The French experience had been comparable. But failure merely prompted Joffre to similar efforts on a yet greater scale. What was needed, he decided, was more men, guns, and shells: enough of these, sufficient weight in the attack, would crack the German defences open.

But zero times two still equals zero. The lesson of the autumn 1915 offensives was to be that the lesson of earlier offensives should have been heeded.

The Shells Scandal

In the case of the British, what had become abundantly clear was that they were desperately short of both the heavy guns and the quantity of shells necessary to cut the enemy's barbed-wire entanglements and silence his machine-guns. The resulting 'Shells Scandal' propelled David Lloyd George into the role of Minister of Munitions and the British economy towards a new kind of state-managed capitalism geared to the needs of war.

Lloyd George soon exercised a larger degree of control over capital, machinery, raw materials, and labour-power than any previous politician. Arms manufacturers had no option but to co-operate if they wished to secure contracts and obtain access to scarce supplies of machinery (much of it imported from the US) and raw materials (often carried at great risk across long, U-boat infested sea-lanes); but they had no reason to object, since state contracts meant guaranteed profits with no risk. The arms manufacturers had a good war.

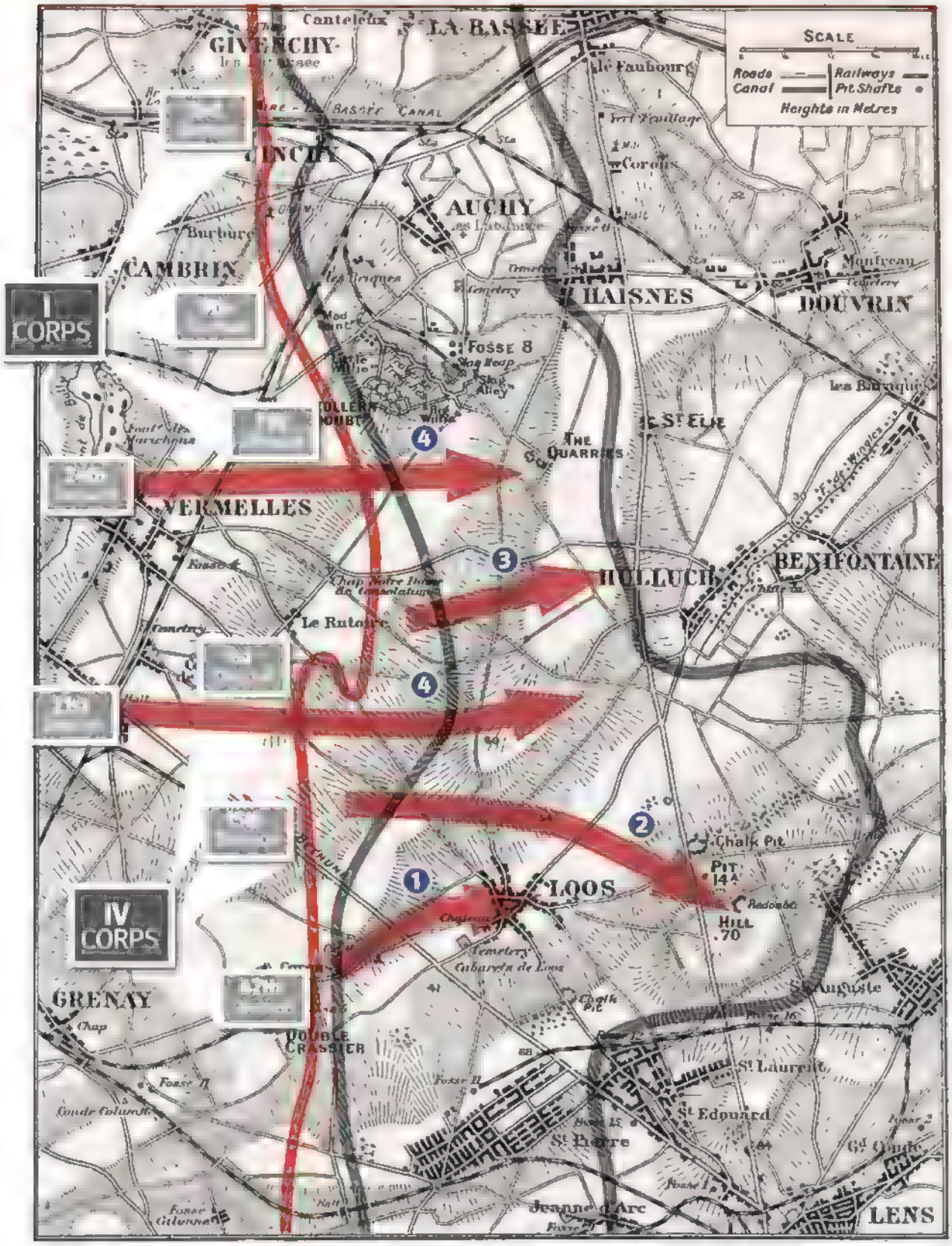
In the space of a year, between mid-1915 and mid-1916, the number of women working in munitions increased from around 200,000 to 500,000. Shell production, which had been 870,000 rounds in 1914, increased from 5.4 million in the second half of 1915 to 35.4 million in the second half of 1916. There were corresponding increases in the production of rifles, machine-guns, grenades, trench-mortars, and, not least, the heavy guns necessary to deliver shells of sufficient weight to destroy barbed wire and deep trenches.

Right Map of the Battle of Loos showing the fighting on 25 and 26 September 1915. The British front-line is shown in red. The German first and second lines are shown in grey. The attack was made all along the First Army front shown here on the morning of 25 September, but major gains were made only on IV Corps' front, where the 47th Division took Loos itself **[1]**, the 15th Division took Hill 70 **[2]**, and the 1st Division took part of the German second line near Hulluch **[3]**. The next day, 26 September, the 21st and 24th Divisions launched doomed assaults designed to relieve the forward elements and continue the offensive **[4]**.

Volunteers for the trenches

The recruitment of men to serve in a mass army had long preceded this belated creation of a total-war economy. Since August 1914, thousands had enrolled each day, with no less than 33,000 on the peak day of 3 September, such that some 760,000 men joined the British Army in the first eight weeks of the First World War. Eventually, 2.5 million 'Kitchener Volunteers' would sign up.

The great majority were organised into 'New Armies' of 100,000 men each, the new divisions and brigades being formed of additional battalions of existing line regiments. This reflected Kitchener's conservative distrust of the Territorials. He might have used the 270,000 trained men of the Territorial Force (TF) as a spine around which to construct new formations; instead, regarding the TF as part-time 'Saturday afternoon soldiers', he preferred to start from scratch. ▷


SCALE
Roads
Railways
Canal
Pit Shafts
Heights in Metres
I CORPS
IV CORPS
GIVENCHY-
LA BASSÉE
Canteleux
le Faubourg
Corons
AUCHY
les Labourse
Burbure
CAMBRIN
HAISNES
DOUVRIN
Montreau
Les Brebis
Fosse 8
Slag Heap
Shaft
Alley
St ELIE
THE QUARRIES
VERMELLES
HULLUCH
BENIFONTAINE
Le Rutoire
Cemetery
Chalk Pit
PIT 14A
HILL 70
LOOS
Cemetery
Cabaret de Lens
GRENAY
DOUBLE CRASSIER
St Laurent
St Edouard
St Pierre
Gd Condé
Jeanne d'Arc
LENS
1
2
3
4

LOOS, 1915

The result was three armies. The old Regular battalions received periodic replacements and remained in existence throughout the war. About 70 existing TF battalions volunteered for overseas service in August 1914, and there would be almost 700 TF battalions serving in all by November 1918. And a succession of New Armies, formed of Kitchener Volunteers, began to enter the line from the spring of 1915 onwards.

Regulars, Territorials, and Volunteers all three fought at Loos in September 1915. All fought with great courage, but many with precious little skill, and few under the direction of officers, especially at the senior level, who had mastered the demands of the modern battlefield.

Dug-out Blimps

One problem was the desperate shortage of officers and NCOs of any stripe, given Britain's historic lack of a large peacetime army. Many Kitchener Volunteers, as well as wearing their own clothes and drilling with broomsticks when they first joined up, found themselves commanded by 'dug-outs' brought out of retirement who had last seen service in the Boer War. 'They were totally ignorant of trench warfare,' explains Correlli Barnett. 'As products of the Duke of Cambridge's army, they were also too often Colonel Blimps and Sergeant Blimps and Corporal Blimps. The style of command that might have worked with slum-dwellers in the 1890s did not go down well with the citizen volunteers of 1914. The first acquaintance of a cross-section of the nation with military life was not a happy one.'

The problem was similar among the colonial cavalry generals who dominated the senior rungs of the BEF. Commanding a brigade in the Hindu Kush or a division on the South African plain was a radically different proposition from commanding an entire army in a war of industrialised attrition against European enemies.

The weaknesses at the top had been apparent as early as August 1914. Field-Marshal French had failed to co-ordinate the movements of his two army corps, such that their lines of march diverged by as much as 15 miles at certain times during the Retreat from Mons, and he had then panicked, wanting at one point to retire on the Channel ports and evacuate to Britain, later wishing to withdraw from the Allied line to refit somewhere west of Paris – a potentially disastrous course of action which was prevented only by the personal intervention of Kitchener himself.

'At present,' commented J F C Fuller, the later tank-war theorist, 'we are controlled... by a hierarchy which, though autocratic, is sterile. It fears initiative, it is terrified of originality, and it suppresses criticism.' This, however, was the military caste which led the British Army at the Battle of Loos.

The battlefield

Enlightenment was dawning. Haig did not like the proposed battle-ground: it was 'bare and open and so swept by rifle and machine-gun fire from the German trenches and the numerous fortified villages immediately behind them that a rapid advance would be impossible'.

It was a dismal place, a coal-mining district in which the Germans had ensconced themselves in strong defensive positions amid pit-heads, slag-heaps, and workers' villages. From these they looked out across relatively open ground towards the trenches from which the British attackers would come.

Haig did not like the ground and nor was he satisfied with his supply of heavy guns and stockpiles of shells. The British Army had only 117 heavy guns at Loos, whereas their French allies deployed 420 in the northern Artois sector of the offensive and no less than 830 in the southern Champagne sector. British factories were still turning out only 22,000 shells a day at a time when French factories were producing 100,000 and German and Austrian 250,000. As for manpower, while the French planned to attack with 17 divisions in the north and 27 in the south, the British assault force would comprise just nine, six for the main assault, three in reserve.

What seems to have persuaded Haig,

Below British infantry storm a German trench on the first day of Loos.

despite his better judgement, was the provision of 150 tons of chlorine gas that was to be released from 5,250 large metal cylinders in the British front-line trenches shortly before zero hour.

Chemical warfare

Gas has three effects: it can kill or disable through asphyxiation, especially men lying low in dugouts, trenches, and shell-holes who are otherwise invulnerable; it can cause panic; and it can impose the often considerable inconvenience of anti-gas precautions (men wearing gas-masks operate well below par). But it is highly volatile, being dependent for direction and effect on a factor wholly outside human control: the wind.

The meteorological reports were at first promising, then bad, and finally uncertain. Haig was reduced to watching puffs of cigarette smoke drifting vaguely north-eastwards at 5.00am on the almost still morning of 25 September. By 5.40am, the wind seemed to have picked up a bit. 'The leaves of the poplar trees gently rustled,' he reported. 'But what a risk I must run of gas blowing back upon our own dense masses of troops!'

Robert Graves was in the trenches waiting to go over with the second line. 'It seems that at half-past four, an RE captain commanding the gas-company in the front-line phoned through to divisional headquarters: "Dead calm. Impossible discharge accessory." The answer he got was: "Accessory to be discharged at all costs."

'The spanners for unscrewing the cocks of the cylinders proved, with two or three exceptions, to be misfits. The gas-men rushed about shouting for the loan of an adjustable spanner. They managed to discharge one or two cylinders; the gas went whistling out, forming a thick cloud a few yards off in no-man's-land, and then gradually spread back into our trenches.

'The Germans, who had been expecting gas, immediately put on their gas-helmets, semi-rigid ones, better than ours. Bundles of oily cotton-waste were strewn along the German parapet and set alight as a barrier to the gas. Then their batteries opened on our lines. The confusion in the front trench must have been horrible; direct hits broke several of the gas-cylinders, the trench filled with gas, the gas-company stampeded.'

Dawn assault

The scene was repeated along many sectors of the British front. In others, where the gas carried well, the initial British attack achieved some success, but the cost was always high, and the advanced hand-holds gained on German defensive terrain were therefore, without exception, precarious.

The infantry attack went in along the whole front at 6.30am, the delay between gas discharge and assault designed to exhaust the protective potential of the oxygen apparatus used by enemy machine-gunners, and to give the British guns an opportunity to blast gaps in the defences.

The 15th Highland Division, one of three forming Rawlinson's IV Corps on the British right, stormed forwards, overran the first German line, and then pushed on to Hill 70, one of Haig's primary objectives. Unfortunately, having reached the summit, thinking the job done, they were then caught on the far downward slope by murderous fire from an intact second line of trenches which the Germans had only recently completed. By the end of the day the division had suffered 60% casualties, with some, such as the 9th Black Watch, all but annihilated.

Above British infantry fix bayonets before going over the top.

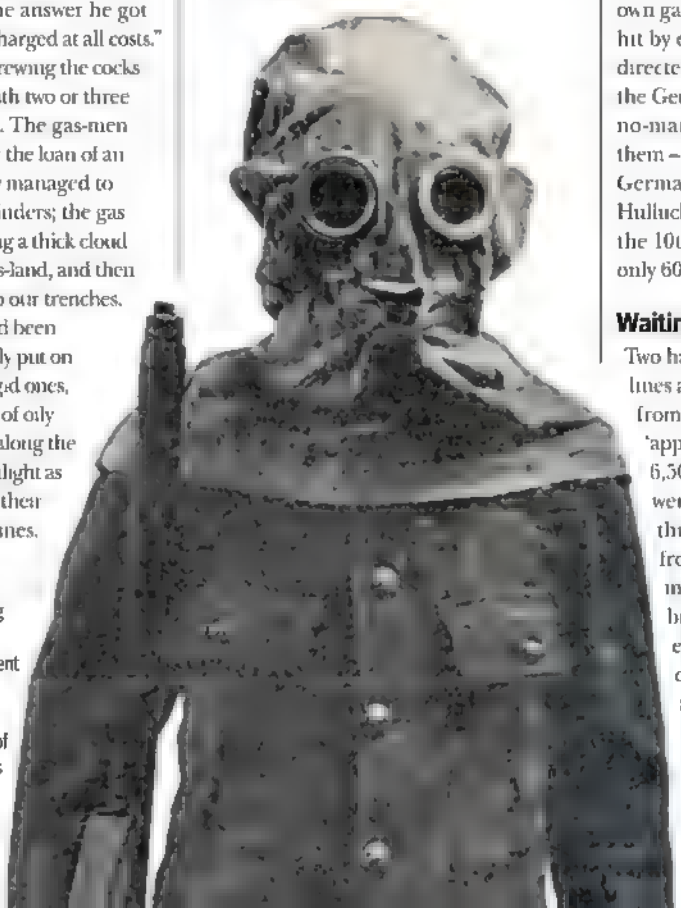
The 47th Territorial Division to the right of the 15th also made some ground, crossing the enemy first-line trenches and capturing Loos itself, before coming to a halt with around 15% of their men down.

The 1st Division forming Rawlinson's left was yet harder hit. Many of the attacking infantry were caught in their own gas, and many who were not were hit by enfilading machine-gun fire directed from concealed positions that the Germans had pushed forwards into no-man's-land. Some units – or bits of them – nonetheless broke into the second German trench-line in the vicinity of Hulluch, but by then they were fully spent: the 10th Gloucesters, for example, had only 60 men still fighting.

Waiting for reinforcements

Two hand-holds deep inside German lines at Hill 70 and Hulluch. A report from the front-line that the enemy 'appear to be retiring'. But when the 6,500 men of the reserve battalions were pushed forwards, they were thrown at the undefeated German front-line defences at Lone Tree, not in the directions where successful break-ins had been achieved on either side. Meantime, the Germans of the second line were regrouping and launching counterattacks with some of the reinforcements already being rushed to the scene.

French, installed in a BEF ▷



Right A British soldier wearing a 1915-vintage gas-mask. These were essential equipment during the dawn attack on 25 September because the British had released 150 tons of chlorine gas some 50 minutes before the infantry went over.

Above A rare photograph taken in the thick of the fighting that truly captures the visceral character of trench warfare. A Scottish unit has crossed no-man's-land (notice the wire behind the crouching figures) and cleared the German trench ahead of them, but they are pinned down on the reverse side of the parapet by incoming fire from positions deeper within the enemy trench complex. The flag is a signal to their own artillery. Friendly fire casualties were frequent during offensives on the Western Front.

headquarters located 25 miles from Loos, only released control of the three reserve divisions to Haig at midday on 25 September. In consequence, they were able to play no part in the action of the first day. When they entered the fray mid-morning on the 26th, they were exhausted by a night march, soaked to the skin by a rain-storm, and sent into action without a proper meal.

The 21st and 24th Divisions, both inexperienced New Army formations, attacked in broad daylight, across open ground, without proper artillery preparation, with no possibility of surprise, and against thoroughly reorganised and reinforced German resistance.

'One battalion in particular,' reported a German regiment of its own unit's deployment, 'had an excellent position along the edge of a disused quarry overgrown with thick bushes and scrub. They were well concealed from view, and yet had a perfect field of fire to front or flank. Four machine-guns were placed in position there, with the champion machine-gunner of the regiment at one of them.'

Machine-gun massacre

What followed, here and along the line, was a massacre of the innocent. 'Ten ranks of extended line could clearly be distinguished, each one estimated at more than 1,000 men, and offering such a target as had never been seen before, or even thought possible. Never had machine-gunners such straightforward work to do nor done it so effectively.

'They traversed to and fro along the enemy's ranks unceasingly. The men stood on the fire-steps, some even on the parapets, and fired exultantly into the mass of men advancing across open grass-land. As the entire field of fire was covered with the enemy's infantry, the effect was devastating and they could be seen falling literally in hundreds.'

Advancing across open ground, in ordered lines, against uncut wire, with minimal or non-existent artillery support, it is little wonder that, of the 10,000 men with which the two divisions attacked that day more than four in five became casualties.

The battle was effectively over. Though it spluttered on for weeks more in the way of so many pointless offensives on the Western Front – only on 4 November was the end formally declared – the lines quickly re-crystallised around the minimal gains of the first day. Total British casualties amounted to 60,000. German casualties were only a third as many. At that rate, the Germans would have won the war.

One entire army had been consumed in 1914. The Regular Army – the 'Old Contemptibles' of the British Expeditionary Force – had been effectively destroyed in the First Battle of Ypres, a ferocious, flailing, month-long battle in the mud as each side attempted to flank the other before the opposing trench-lines came to rest upon the sea. Loos and the other battles of 1915 had consumed another: the casualty lists of the Territorials had quickly mounted to match those of the Regulars in 1914.

But more men were being funnelled into the mincing machine all the time. Though the first of the New Armies had already been bloodied, most of the Kitchener Volunteers were still on their way. When they arrived, Field-Marshal French would be gone – felled, finally, by a row about the mishandling of the reserves at Loos – and his ambitious, critical, cold-blooded subordinate, Douglas Haig, would have assumed the supreme command.

Haig was charged by his political masters to achieve success whatever the cost. Success for long eluded him, but failure would prove just as costly. As many men were destined to fall on the first day of the Somme as in a month of fighting at Loos.

COMING NEXT

A History of the BRITISH ARMY IN 25 BATTLES
SOMME, 1916

SOMME

24 JUNE–16 NOVEMBER 1916

The Battle of the Somme was the bloodiest single battle in British history. It destroyed much of the manpower of the New Armies of Kitchener Volunteers. It also destroyed any enthusiasm for war. It thereby forced radical change on the British Army: both mass conscription to fill the ranks, and new technology, tactics, and thinking for the conduct of battle.

The *Military History Monthly* History of the British Army in 25 Battles is being run in collaboration with the National Army Museum. Our special thanks are due to Alastair Massie, Head of Archives, Photographs, Film, and Sound.

Did the use of Gas help or hinder the BEF at Loos?

You can find the answer to this and other questions as a member of The Western Front Association

The Western Front Association

THE CHRISTMAS TRUCE

Anonymous

German and British troops fraternising in no-man's-land, 1914

Towards the end of November 1914, the German and Allied armies on the Western Front found themselves bogged down in a stalemate, occupying trenches that in some cases were just 30 yards apart. On Christmas Eve that year, the war was temporarily put on hold by delivery of a chocolate cake, sent by the Germans to the British, with a note proposing a ceasefire so that the Germans could play a concert. The idea was popular among the British soldiers, who warmly accepted the proposal and sent back tobacco as a present.

Soon, this feeling of goodwill and festive cheer had spread along the 27-mile British frontline, with other peace-offerings being sent to opposing trenches. Enemies who had shelled and sniped at one another were now just a group of men, calling to each other, singing songs, and, incredibly, meeting up in the middle of no-man's-land to talk and exchange gifts.

For obvious reasons, the German and British high commands looked unfavourably on such fraternisation. Orders were quickly given to end the truce and for the men to get on with the serious business of killing each other. Nevertheless, some ceasefires lasted well into January, neither side wanting to be the first to recommence fighting after the bond they had formed over Christmas.

In this extract from his 1933 book, *Old Soldiers Never Die*, Frank Richards recalls that Christmas morning in 1914:

On Christmas morning we stuck up a
Christmas on it. The enemy had
would sometimes go

us stayed behind to see what would happe
Two of our men then threw their equipment o
Germans did the same and com
bank, our two men going to meet them. They met and sh
hands and then we all got out of the trench. The

Commander rushed into the trench and endeavoured to prevent it but he was too late, the whole of the Company were now out and so were the Germans.

Their Company Commander asked ours if he would accept a couple of barrels of beer and assured him that they would not make his men drunk. They had plenty of it in the brewery. He accepted the offer with thanks and a couple of their men rolled the barrels over and we took them into our trench. The German officer sent one of his men back to the trench who appeared shortly after carrying a tray with bottles and [illegible] on it. Officers of both sides clinked glasses and drunk one another's health and agreed that the unofficial truce would end at midnight. At dusk we went back to our respective trenches.

Just before midnight we all made it up not to commence firing before they did. At night there was always plenty of firing by both sides if there were no working parties or patrols out. During the whole of Boxing Day we never fired a shot, and they the same, each side seemed to be waiting for the other to set the ball a-rolling. One of their men shouted across in English and inquired how we had enjoyed the beer. We shouted back and told him it was very weak but that we were very grateful for it. We were conversing off and on during the whole of the day.

Khmer Rouge

FROM FREEDOM FIGHTERS TO MASS MURDERERS

Tom Farrell explores the tragedy of Cambodia in the 1970s.

The population of the Cambodian capital must have thought themselves caught within a surreal nightmare on 17 April 1975.

As air-raid sirens wailed across Phnom Penh that afternoon, the country's new masters moved among the nervous residents of the city. Most were teenagers, attired in black pyjamas, Mao-style caps, and rubber sandals. Many wore the *krama*, the traditional chequered scarf of the Khmer peasant. They marched up the boulevards, clutching AK-47 rifles or balancing rocket-launchers over one shoulder.

Five years earlier, Phnom Penh had been regarded as Asia's prettiest capital, representing an exquisite cross-pollination of French and Cambodian culture. Riviera-themed villas, bistros, and opium parlours nestled behind teak and frangipani trees.

Now, following a vicious civil war culminating in a cruel three-month siege, the city echoed with gun- and mortar-fire. The United States, with defeat imminent in next-door Vietnam, had executed 'Operation Eagle Pull' five days before. It lasted just two hours.

Chinook helicopters roared down onto a special Landing Zone on a football field near the US Embassy. Some 360 Marines took up positions around the perimeter, brandishing their M-16 rifles. In Vietnam, riots took place during the helicopter evacuations of Danang and Saigon, but most Cambodians thought the Americans were bringing in reinforcements. Crowds smiled and waved as 82 Americans, 159 Cambodians (including acting President Saukham Khoy), and 35 third-country nationals were whisked into the tropical skies.

Led by the secretive Pol Pot, the Khmer Rouge was a mysterious entity.

Left All smiles at first. Civilians celebrate the Communist victory in Phnom Penh in April 1975. Their 'liberators' look ominously grim-faced.

The US Ambassador John Gunther Dean left Cambodia predicting a bloodbath when they rolled into Phnom Penh. But something entirely unexpected was happening.

Khmer Rouge fighters with loudspeakers squawked warnings that the Americans were about to bomb the capital. All citizens had to evacuate immediately. Within hours, thousands, tens of thousands, and finally hundreds of thousands Cambodian civilians shuffled along the highways towards the countryside.

No exceptions were allowed: even the hospitals were emptied. Bloodied and wounded civilians pushed beds out into the streets, plasma bottles bobbing ▷

Above Lon Nol's poorly trained soldiers remove the bodies of fallen comrades from the battlefield.

Photo on this page: © Magnum photos

beside them. In the chaos, thousands of families were broken up, never to reunite. Cambodia, now renamed 'Democratic Kampuchea', would devour up to two million of its own citizens over the next four years. The 20th century was coming to a premature end. This was the beginning of 'Year Zero'.

Sideshow war

For 17 years after independence, Cambodia had striven to remain neutral while nearby Vietnam and Laos became Cold War flashpoints. The Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army established bases in the north and east of Cambodia, part of their 'Ho Chi Minh' supply trail into South Vietnam. A small indigenous Communist movement, known as 'les Khmers Rouges' existed, but were regarded as a marginal force, confined to rural areas.

Then, in April 1970, a pro-American *coup d'état* put the incompetent and corrupt General Lon Nol in power. The new premier turned to Washington for arms and weaponry. President Richard Nixon was only too happy to oblige. The United States and South Vietnamese armies were invited to attack Communist sanctuaries in rural Cambodia, backed by incessant B-52 bombing. This merely pushed the North Vietnamese further west towards Phnom Penh. Lon Nol's forces, led by generals who press-ganged schoolchildren into battle and created 'phantom' brigades in order to pocket their salaries, were no match.

By 1973, over two thirds of the country was in Communist hands. Both Houses of Congress voted to end B-52 missions that year, but by then the traditional infrastructure of rural society had been devastated.

'For two years, I slept in a cave,' remembers Phan Ana, a journalist from northern Cambodia who was a schoolchild in the early 1970s. 'My house was a traditional Cambodian home. We could not sleep there at night.'

The Khmer Rouge was initially backed by the Vietnamese, who even armed a rebel faction known as the 'Khmer Rumdos'. But following the 1973 Paris Peace Agreement, which ended American combat operations in South Vietnam, they withdrew from the Cambodian battlefield. The Khmer Rouge was left to fight on its own, mostly during the dry season, from November to May.

Lon Nol's Khmer Republic by then controlled Phnom Penh, a few larger towns, and a strip of territory in western Cambodia. Rage at the bombings provided the Khmer Rouge with thousands of fresh recruits, and in the areas they controlled, they began a radical restructuring of society. Agriculture was collectivised and Buddhist monks sent to work in the fields.

But unlike the Khmer Republic, whose survival depended on a precarious river link and, later on, an air-lift, the Communists could feed their people. On 1 April 1975, Lon Nol departed Phnom Penh for Hawaii, dying there in 1985, a broken man.

> Lon Nol's generals press-ganged schoolchildren into battle and created 'phantom' brigades in order to pocket their salaries.

Right 13-year-old government army soldiers in an occupied pagoda near Phnom Penh.

Purification

In April 1975, Long Norin was a 37-year-old party cadre, based near the Laotian border. One week after the fall of Phnom Penh, he was summoned to the capital. He recalls passing close to the River Mekong outside the city.

'I had seen the people coming out of Phnom Penh,' he says. 'I also saw dead bodies in the water, but I said nothing to anybody.'

Within hours of victory, black-uniformed Khmer Rouge had clashed with green-uniformed troops from the 'Rumdos' faction, whose leaders were soon to be purged. Within days, virtually all foreign nationals in the city were crowded into the grounds of the French Embassy. The new government announced that they did not recognise the territorial privilege of the embassy; the 800 or so Westerners could remain there, but all Cambodians, including Lon Nol ministers and their families who were seeking asylum, had to be expelled. Most left the embassy knowing they were on a public death-list.

Dr Murray Carmichael, a young anaesthetist from Edinburgh, then with the International Red Cross, remembers how even racially mixed families were broken up: Cambodian women married to foreigners could remain in the embassy, but Cambodian men in the same position could not.

After a fortnight, the foreigners were transported to Thailand in a convoy of trucks. 'There was this terrific xenophobia, because there were Chinese, Vietnamese, Indians who were second- or third-generation Cambodians. This was all they'd known,' says Carmichael. 'And they were all thrown out as well, so it was a purifying of the race. Only Cambodians were allowed to stay in this Great Year Zero.'

Forward to the past

The outside world watched the emptying of Cambodia's cities with bafflement and unease more than outright horror. Once the last foreigners had left, 'Democratic' Kampuchea became the world's most secretive nation, abjuring such imperialist extravagances as postal, phone, and rail networks, linked to the outside world only by a fortnightly flight to Beijing.

When Cambodian refugees began arriving on the Thai border, bringing accounts of starvation and massacres, Western analysts tended to be sceptical, especially when anti-Communist writers circulated spurious atrocity stories that were later shown to be bogus. It was only after the Vietnamese toppled the regime in early 1979 that the full extent of Khmer Rouge savagery became clear.

But why were the towns evacuated? The easiest explanation is simple fanaticism. The political gestation of the Khmer Rouge had taken place in an era when the Chinese Communists, admired by Khmer Rouge leaders, had yet to disavow Mao's Great Leap Forward or his Cultural Revolution, both of which had led to chaos in China.

For decades, the Khmer peasantry had resented, often with good reason, the Westernised elites of the towns. Since ancient times, their lives had been characterised by back-breaking toil and tied to an unchanging rhythm of monsoon and dry season. This possibly accounted for the Khmer Rouge's Manichean world-view, allowing for no compromises or accommodations. And the civil war created an army of orphans, brutalised by the American bombings. ▷

Photo on this page: © Magnum photos

THE LAST BATTLE

It is a bitter irony that the last few names to be carved on the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial in Washington DC were Marines killed in the *Mayaguez* incident of May 1975.

American involvement in Indo-China was supposedly predicated on the theory that a Communist victory in Vietnam would set off a 'domino effect' that would eventually colour all South-East Asia red. Yet days after the fall of Phnom Penh, the new Revolutionary Army of Kampuchea (RAK) launched attacks right along the Vietnamese frontier, from the provinces of Ratanakiri and Mondulkiri in the east, all the way down to the islands of Poulo Wai and Phu Quoc in the Gulf of Thailand. With the common enemy in retreat, ancient animosities quickly reasserted themselves.

On 19 April, Meas Mut (son-in-law of the Khmer Rouge military commander Ta Mok) led the RAK's Division 3 in a seaborne attack. They shelled and briefly occupied Phu Quoc and another island. Vietnamese forces struck back, briefly capturing Poulo Wai in May.

The maritime border, known as the Brevié Line, had long been contentious. French Indo-China's Governor-General Jules Brevié proclaimed the administrative division in 1939, demarcating the waters off Cambodia and Cochin China (the southernmost sector of Vietnam) to facilitate mining concessions. The division was biased towards Vietnam, the jewel in the colonial crown, and unsurprisingly, successive Cambodian rulers laid claim to the islands south of the line, with their surrounding reserves of oil and gas.

The SS *Mayaguez*

Clashes erupted throughout May-June, as officials shuttled between Hanoi and Phnom Penh, nominally still allies.

Then on 12 May, a cargo ship called the SS *Mayaguez* blundered into the island war, triggering off the last battle fought by the United States in Indo-China. With a crew of 39, the *Mayaguez* was carrying government supplies from Saigon to the Thai port of Sattaheap. The ship had steamed to within 1.75 miles of Poulo Wai before any warning had been issued to shipping by Washington.

At 2.20pm, shots were fired across the ship's bow and Khmer Rouge soldiers boarded. The ship's radio operator sent out a distress signal that was relayed to Washington.

Around the White House basement table, officials and generals excitedly passed around assessments of the situation. The capture of the ship and its crew, with the US-backed regimes in Phnom Penh and Saigon recently fallen, represented an opportunity for a final bout of

Top USAF para-rescueman Sergeant Wayne Fisk, from the 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, guides marines to a rescue helicopter.

These were the blank sheets upon which Pol Pot could imprint his vision of a Kampuchea with more in common with the ancient kingdom centred at Angkor Wat than 20th-century Communism. Why else was the great Angkor temple represented on the new national flag? This would be a Kampuchea reborn, a fiercely independent society purified through collective labour.

Empty city

But the decision to deport the urban population to the countryside, unprecedented in revolutionary history, was probably underscored by myriad considerations. The Khmer Rouge had rocketed Pochentong Airport on 11 April, ending the air-lift. US government documents disclosed that Lon Nol's government possessed food stocks that, optimistically, would have fed Phnom Penh for 10 days.

On the day of 'liberation', there were three million people in the capital, most of them displaced by the American bombings and the war. Most were crowded into festering shanty-towns. Unlike the 600,000 original inhabitants, these Cambodians would have been happy to return to their original villages had the exodus been organised in a less hasty and cruel manner.

Within the Khmer Rouge-controlled 'base' areas in the north and east of Cambodia, there had been some repair to the damage to agricultural land wrought by four years of carpet-bombings. Cambodia's new rulers could not transport supplies into Phnom Penh and refused any accommodation with the international aid community, who they regarded as pro-Lon Nol. However, the next rice harvest was months away, so the deportations virtually guaranteed a famine. And all government-held towns, even those not short of food, were emptied.

Security weighed heavily on the minds of the Khmer Rouge leadership. The organisation was intensely secretive. Foreign journalists foolhardy enough to enter the base areas during 1970-1973 were never heard of again.

But Pol Pot's fear that the CIA would continue to run spy-rings in post-war Cambodia had some basis in truth. Years later, one operative recalled listening in Bangkok as a Cambodian agent in Kompong Speou screamed down her radio: 'They are breaking down the door! What should I do with the radio? What should I do?'

When he did not reply, her last words before the radio went dead were 'You people are worse than the French!'

The warning Phnom Penh was about to be bombed may have been a lie, but Washington's reaction to the capture of the SS *Mayaguez* (see box left) four weeks after 'liberation' was a reminder of the new regime's vulnerability.

Finally, like the North Vietnamese next door, the Khmer Rouge had achieved military victory far sooner than expected. In April 1975, the Khmer Rouge rank and file was mostly very young, ill disciplined, and incapable of running the cities. American intelligence estimated

Below A Khmer Rouge guerrilla. The civil war created an army of angry orphans, terrorised by the onslaught of the American bombing.

Photo: © Cody Images

that there were around 70,000 regular fighters at the start of 1975, many of them hastily enlisted after the terrible losses of the 1973-1974 dry season offensives. An estimated 1,000 party cadres were already occupied administering the 3-4 million Cambodians living in the base areas. And even within this core group, there existed deep divisions of ideology and allegiance.

Pol Pot

No one knew this better than the mastermind of Year Zero. On the morning of 20 April, he arrived in Phnom Penh by jeep together with several of his zone leaders. Avoiding the main boulevards, still choked with evacuees, Pol Pot travelled via bombed-out hamlets and paddy fields along a back road.

The new leaders of Democratic Kampuchea took up residence within Phnom Penh's radio station, the place from where they had secretly plotted revolution in the early 1960s. They soon decamped to Preah Keo Morokat (the Silver Pagoda). There they established an all-encompassing secretariat, Office 870, linked to a network of offices codenamed K-1 to K-20. Pol Pot lived and worked in K-21, a two-storey building previously owned by the National Bank.

The Khmer Rouge deputy leader Nuon Chea and their chief intellectual Khieu Samphan were assigned K-3, behind the National Palace. Other 'K' offices were responsible for logistics, messengers, hospital services, motor pool, radio communications, sewing, and fishing.

None of this was known to the bulk of the Cambodian population, most of whom would not even hear the name of Pol Pot until after the regime's fall.

For the next four years, all but a few carefully tended sectors of Phnom Penh remained empty. The streets were silent and open spaces choked with vegetation.

Meanwhile, those 'new' people, city-dwellers deemed 'feudalists' or 'reactionaries' under the new order, were marched to the base areas, whose original inhabitants, the 'old' people, regarded them with suspicion and resentment. Forced to work all day, digging ditches or planting rice, urban Cambodians died in droves.

The Killing Fields

'They had just one kind of medicine from China that was used to treat fevers,' says Kong Duong, a former member of the Khmer Rouge. 'The people from the towns were used to eating good food and had sanitation. When they reached the countryside, they drank from ponds. They did not have enough to eat.'

And any failure to work with sufficient vigour, regardless of starvation or illness, could result in execution. Under the billowing red and gold flags of Democratic Kampuchea, the representatives of Angkar (as the Khmer Rouge called themselves) sifted through its toiling population, hunting for Cambodians who had known foreigners, spoke foreign languages, or had a Western education. ▷

Top Two victims of the savagery of the Khmer Rouge.
Right Pol Pot, the mastermind of Year Zero and the man responsible for the deaths of roughly 20% of the Cambodian population during his six-year dictatorship.

Photo: © Alamy Images

Above The SS *Mayaguez*, which was captured by Khmer Rouge fighters in 1975.
Left These USAF airmen were *en route* to the *Mayaguez* when their HH-53C helicopter crashed, due to a mechanical malfunction. All 23 men on board died.

sabre-rattling, perhaps with B-52 strikes for extra emphasis. The aircraft carrier USS *Coral Sea*, the destroyer escort *Harold E Holt*, and the missile destroyer *Henry B Wilson* were immediately ordered to divert from the western Pacific to the Gulf of Thailand.

Crisis

The following morning, American spotter planes picked up a fishing boat moving the *Mayaguez* crew towards the island of Koh Tang. A day later, another boat was seen moving towards the mainland port of Kompong Som, and attempts were made to prevent landfall with US planes gassing and strafing the boat.

On day three of the crisis, Washington appealed to the United Nations to mediate for the crew's release. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger urged the use of B-52 strikes. A cable from the Joint Chiefs to CINCPAC (US Pacific Command) under the command of Admiral Noel Gayler read: 'Sink all Cambodian small craft in the target area of Koh Tang, Poulo Wai, Kompong Som, and Ream Airfield... Guam-based B-52s and tankers will be utilised above planning...'

The order to deploy B-52 bombers was countermanded, however, and what ensued remains controversial to this day. At the time, most of the American press was gung-ho; President Ford went on national television to praise the rescue effort. But despite the provisions of the 1973 War Powers Act, checking presidential powers in wartime, the US Congress only learned of the attack after it commenced.

Moreover, intelligence was available indicating that the entire *Mayaguez* crew were on the Cambodian mainland. Nonetheless, at dawn on 15 May, 175 marines out of a planned 600-man rescue force, flown from Okinawa to Thailand, attacked Koh Tang.

The marines were expecting light resistance. In fact, hundreds of RAK soldiers were dug in and began firing as the first helicopters out of a commitment comprising five CH-53 Knifes and three HH-53 Jolly Greens approached two landing zones on the beach. Fifteen Marines were killed on the island, and 23 more perished in a helicopter crash returning towards Thailand.

Casualties

Startled and intimidated, but doubtless also believing their anti-foreign paranoia had been grimly validated, the Khmer Rouge released the crew. At 10.08am on 15 May, the sailors were picked up by the *Harold E Holt* after a fishing vessel delivered them to where the *Mayaguez* was anchored.

Despite this, aircraft launched from the *Coral Sea* carried out fresh strikes. In Kompong Som, the railway yard, port, airfield, and Cambodia's only refinery were virtually destroyed.

In the chaotic retreat from Koh Tang, the members of a three-man machine-gun team were inadvertently left on the island. Lance Corporal Joseph N Hargrove, Private First Class Gary Hall, and Private Danny Marshall were listed as MIA (Missing in Action) after the operation, amended to KIA (Killed in Action) in 1976. A reconnaissance sweep of the island a few days later by the *Wilson* with loudspeakers calling out requests in Khmer, French, and English to release any dead or captured Americans, yielded no response.

In recent years, eye-witness accounts by Cambodian veterans of the Koh Tang battle have allowed a fragmentary picture of their fates to emerge. Hargrove was probably apprehended on a beach by the Khmer Rouge soon after the last helicopter departed and summarily shot. But Hall and Marshall may have survived for up to a week on Koh Tang, subsisting on coconuts and stolen food.

Eventually, however, both were captured and transferred to Kompong Som. After around a week of torture, they were bludgeoned to death, a fate soon to befall tens of thousands of Cambodians, among them some of Pol Pot's closest colleagues.

The *Mayaguez* dead are carved in granite on the edge of the Washington Veterans' memorial, the very last Americans killed in the Second Indo-China War.

The countryside was soon littered with the mass graves of those who failed to conceal their pre-war identities. These skull-filled pits became known as the Killing Fields'.

The process of purgation went right to the top. Relations with Vietnam quickly soured, and when the bumper harvests necessary to turn Democratic Kampuchea into an economic powerhouse failed to materialise, the leadership did not blame themselves. The culprits could only be locally recruited agents of the Americans or Vietnamese.

Determined to 'smash' these 'saboteurs', the leadership tasked the Santebal (Khmer Rouge secret police) with establishing a network of prisons. Even top-ranking ministers, particularly those deemed too close to Hanoi, were tortured and killed in the purges that ensued. At Santebal-21, the country's largest prison, located in a former secondary school in Phnom Penh's deserted suburbs, 16,000 people met their doom.

Pol Pot's paranoia was matched by his hubris. By mid-1977, he had launched a series of border attacks against Vietnam, a nation of 44 million, backed by the Soviet Union. 'Each of us must kill 30 Vietnamese,' he ranted in one speech.

The Khmer Rouge sought to wrest back territories in southern Vietnam that had been Cambodian during the Angkor period. But in December 1978, the Vietnamese military struck back. Soviet-supplied tanks stormed along the French-built Highway One into the empty Phnom Penh one month later.

By that time, Pol Pot and his entourage had fled, this time towards the Thai border, where, backed by Thailand, China, and the West, they and other rebel factions would fight a war of attrition against the Vietnamese-installed government for the next 11 years.

In their wake, the Khmer Rouge had left behind a ruined nation, a gulag of empty towns and starved, wandering refugees. The new masters of Phnom Penh may have arrived as foreign occupiers. This time, however, the soldiers on the streets could genuinely claim to be liberators.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tom Farrell is a freelance writer who has travelled extensively in Asia. His reports from there have been used by *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, *The Irish Times*, and *Jane's Intelligence Review*.

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WAR GRAVES REVISITED

Doeke J. Oostra

with a foreword by the late Professor Richard Holmes CBE TD JP

A decade of research went into this comprehensive guidebook. War Graves Revisited will give the reader access to an unparalleled amount of information on a subject barely touched upon by war books in general. Chapters describe Commonwealth war cemeteries as well as those of the United States, and of all other belligerent nations in NW Europe.

"War Graves Revisited" contains almost as many Supplements as it does Chapters. Some of these supplements describe specific aspects such as a survey of Great War graves in the Netherlands, the statistics of war graves, pointers on how to find war graves in the field, on the moral question, on Commonwealth military women's war graves, and others. There is a supplement on Danish war graves and war graves of other nations in Denmark, there is one on war graves in Ireland, and another on the same lines covering a whole range of European countries and territories, to wit Austria, Czechia, Finland, Gibraltar, Italy, Luxemburg, Malta, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and even Switzerland.

Perhaps most importantly: War Graves Revisited has two large reference sections. There is a Gazetteer, listing every war grave site in the Netherlands, Belgium, and North-West Germany. The other arranges sites by nationality, covering most of Europe. If you wanted to locate all Portuguese war grave sites in Europe for example, or those of any other nationality, then it is with this Supplement that you would want to make a start.

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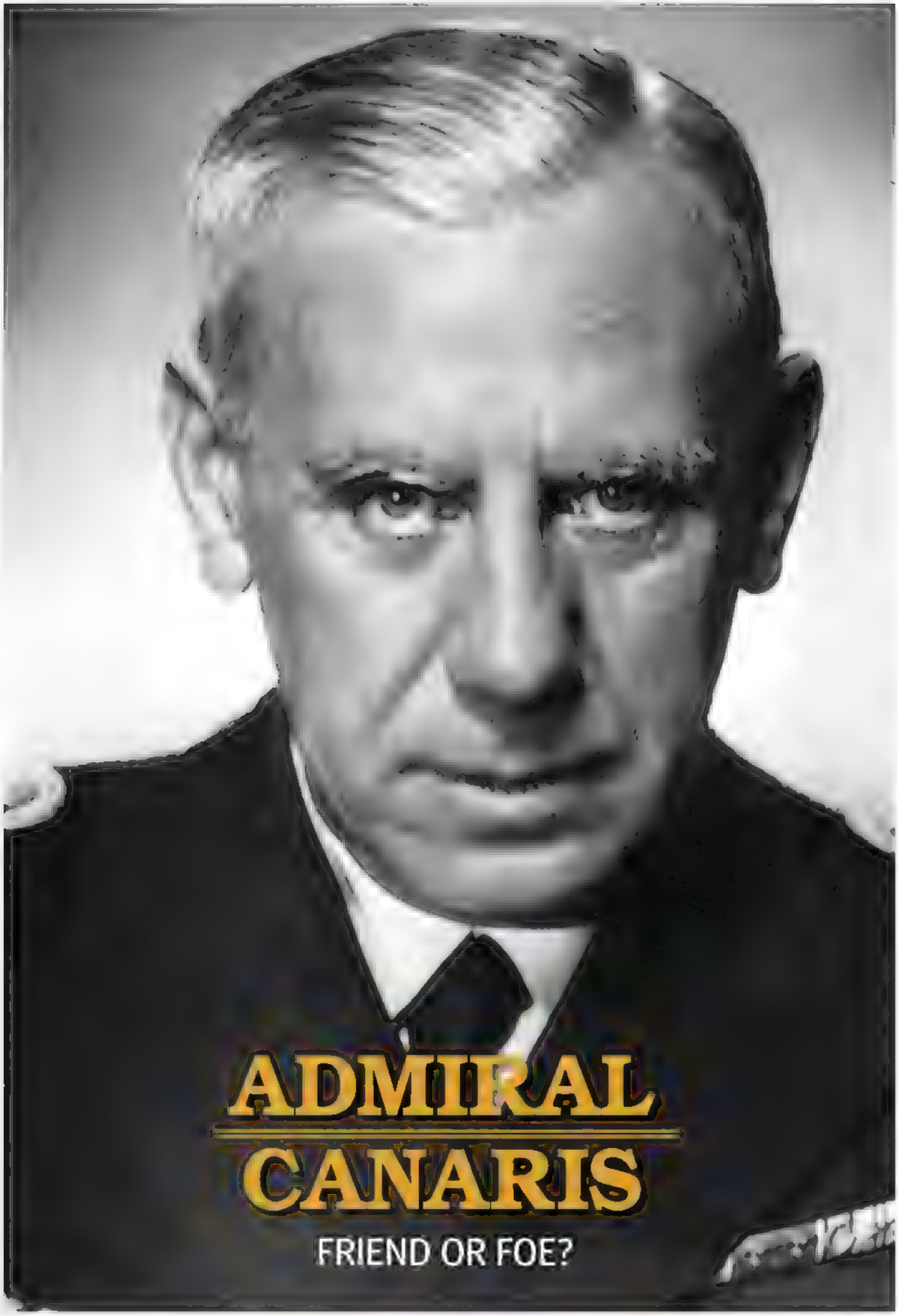

ADMIRAL
CANARIS
FRIEND OR FOE?

He was one of the most powerful men in Nazi Germany. Yet he seems to have been working for the Allies. Over 75 years after he became head of German Intelligence, are we any closer to understanding the motives of Admiral Canaris, the Third Reich's 'gentleman spy'? **Stephen Taylor** investigates.

The stooped, shaven-headed figure left his cell for the last time and shuffled across the courtyard of the Flossenburg concentration camp, accompanied by guards in SS uniform, the bruising covering his naked body evidence of the beatings he had suffered over the preceding weeks.

It was 9 April 1945, less than a month before the end of the war in Europe. The prisoner would not see the end. To prevent him falling into the hands of the Allies – now only a few miles from the camp and advancing fast – Hitler himself had ordered that he be executed immediately.

When the troops of General Patton's US Third Army liberated Flossenburg two weeks later, all they would find would be his charred remains, hastily burned by the guards after his life had been extinguished on the camp's gallows.

Of course, in those chaotic and exceedingly bloody final weeks of the war, the murder of one elderly man was an unremarkable event. It was the identity of the victim that mattered: for he was Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, until recently the head of German Intelligence and one of the most senior figures in the Third Reich.

Almost 70 years after his death in Flossenburg, historians have still not unravelled the enigma that was Wilhelm Canaris – just as his opposite numbers in British Intelligence failed to do during the war. To some he was a fiercely anti-Nazi German officer of the old school, one who secretly plotted to undermine Hitler's regime and paid the ultimate price when his treason was uncovered. To others he was a wily, inscrutable master-spy who was one of the Allies' most dangerous and formidable opponents.

Whatever the truth, Wilhelm Canaris was a man defined by deep contradictions: a dreamer and fantasist, but also coldly pragmatic and ruthless; a conservative nationalist who loathed the liberal regime of the Weimar Republic, but also a closet homosexual who, when the Nazis came to power in 1933, set about trying to bring down the country's new leadership.

An upper-class career officer

Born in the village of Aplerbeck, Westphalia, on New Year's Day 1887, the son of a wealthy industrialist, even Canaris's ancestry has become a matter of some mystery and intrigue. During his life he claimed to have been descended from Konstantinos Kanaris, a famed Greek admiral and freedom fighter. Such a heritage fitted perfectly with his sense of romance and adventure. But it was almost certainly untrue, his descendants instead probably being Italian immigrants who arrived in Germany in the 17th century.

Nevertheless, it was this perceived connection to Admiral Kanaris that apparently prompted Wilhelm to join the German Imperial Navy in 1905, at the age of 18, serving as a first lieutenant aboard the battle-cruiser *Dresden* at the outbreak of the First World War.

It was not long before Canaris saw action in this first great struggle between the 20th-century European ▷

> Canaris was a conservative-nationalist who set about trying to bring down the country's new Nazi leadership.

Below The First World War light cruiser *Dresden*, on which Canaris served as a first lieutenant, taking part in the Battle of the Falklands Islands in December 1914.

Above A *Freikorps* unit marches through Munich in May 1919. The traditional dress symbolises their conservative-nationalist politics.

superpowers. In December 1914, the Royal Navy and the German Imperial Navy engaged in one of their first major battles, in the waters around the Falkland Islands. Outnumbered and outgunned, the German fleet under Admiral Graf von Spee was sent to the bottom of the South Atlantic. Only the *Dresden* survived. But after eluding the British for several months, she was eventually caught and badly damaged by the dreadnought *Glasgow* near the coast of Chile.

Seeking sanctuary in a Chilean port, the *Dresden*'s captain elected to scuttle his ship rather than have it fall into enemy hands. Chile, officially neutral but pro-British, interned the crew. But Canaris was unwilling to sit out the war in South America. Aided by his fluent Spanish, he escaped from internment camp and embarked on a gruelling journey across the Andes to Argentina, which, as in the Second World War, was sympathetic to Germany.

Escaped prisoner on the run

Exhausted and stricken with malaria, Canaris nevertheless pressed on with his epic voyage, adopting the identity of an Anglo-Chilean, Reed Rosas, and managing to gain passage on a Dutch steamer bound for Europe.

His luck almost ran out, however, when the ship was boarded in the English Channel by British sailors in search of enemy spies. But Canaris's perfect Spanish and plausible-sounding cover story – that he was travelling to Europe to claim an inheritance – fooled his interrogators.

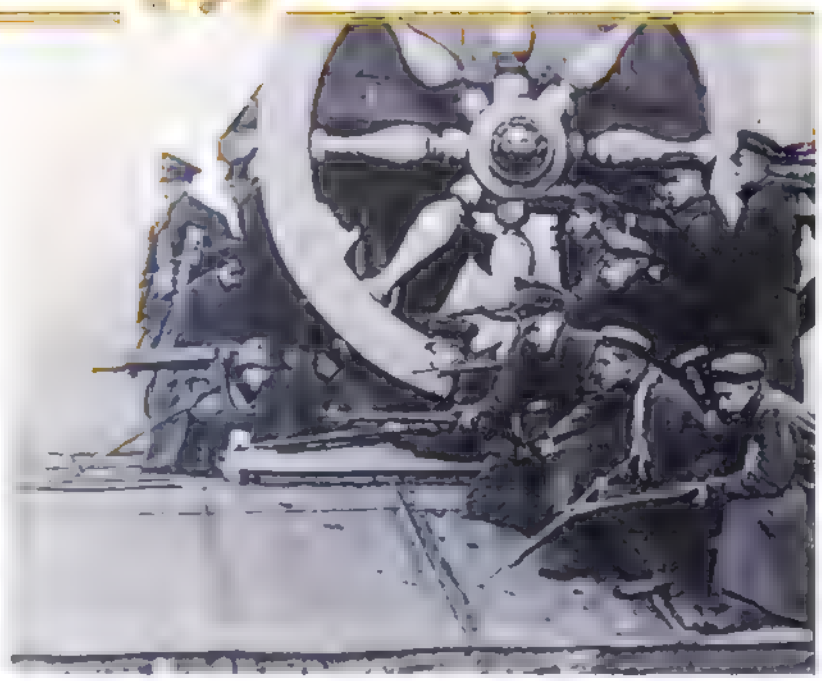
> One version has it that he murdered the prison's priest and escaped disguised as the unfortunate clergyman.

With his great escape, Canaris had proved that he was a natural for intelligence work, and after arriving back in Germany he was sent to neutral Spain to spy on Allied shipping in the Straits of Gibraltar, forging close links with the Spanish that would prove useful in the next world war.

The work was exceedingly dangerous. Canaris soon came to the attention of MI6, who made at least one attempt on his life, and while travelling across Europe to Switzerland, again using his Chilean alias, he was arrested by the Italians, who decided to execute him as a spy.

Accounts vary as to how he survived. One version has it that he murdered the prison's priest and escaped disguised as the unfortunate clergyman. Another, more likely, story suggests powerful friends in Spain persuaded the Italians to release him.

Whatever the truth, Canaris had cheated death, and not for the last time. But, realising that ▷



Right *Freikorps* volunteers – right-wing paramilitaries – in action against revolutionaries in Berlin in January 1919. Canaris was active in the *Freikorps*, which he saw as an essential bulwark against socialism.

Below The scene that confronted Canaris, a successful U-boat commander, when he returned to Kiel in November 1918. The German Revolution began when naval seamen were ordered to sea to fight a desperate final battle against the British fleet. They refused to do so and instead took over the ships and the port. Like so many other conservative officers, Canaris moved to the far right in the post-war period in reaction to the combination of military defeat and socialist revolution.

Left Hitler photographed immediately after the bomb explosion at his Wolf's Lair headquarters in East Prussia. Note the sticking plaster on his hand. Note also arch-loyalist Admiral Karl Doenitz behind him. Hundreds of officers – including Canaris – were to fall victim to the subsequent police terror
Below Flossenburg concentration camp, where Canaris was held and eventually executed in April 1945.

advancement within the Navy could come only through active service at sea, he requested and was granted command of his own U-boat. He went on to distinguish himself in the Mediterranean during the last months of the war by sinking 18 enemy vessels.

Anti-Communist paramilitary

But when sailing back into Kiel harbour on 8 November 1918, just three days before the Armistice, rather than the hero's welcome he expected, Canaris found instead that the country was in the grip of revolution. Naval ratings had mutinied, ships flew the red flag from their masts, there were clashes in the streets, and the *Kaiser* was preparing to abdicate. Canaris's Germany had been defeated – and the returning U-boat captain blamed the Communists, those 'traitors who stabbed Germany in the back' as he would later write.

In the political turmoil of post-war Germany, he became associated with the extreme right-wing militia, the *Freikorps*, which fought regular street battles with revolutionary workers and was involved in numerous murders of left-wing activists.

Despite this, he pledged allegiance to the Weimar Republic and rose steadily through the ranks of the Navy. His private life, too, appeared settled, with marriage to a wealthy industrialist's daughter, Erika Waag, in 1919, with whom he had two daughters.

> The captured spies were offered a stark choice: work for Britain as double agents or face the gallows.

But it was only when Hitler came to power that his career really took off, initially with his appointment as first officer on the elderly battleship *Schlesien*, and then with a return to Intelligence duties and promotion to chief of Germany's foremost spy agency, the *Abwehr* (meaning 'Defence'), on New Year's Day 1935.

Spymaster, saboteur, and would-be assassin

Like many career military men in Germany, Canaris initially welcomed Hitler's rise to power, believing the Nazis would be a strong bulwark against Communism; but he soon realised that Hitler was bent on war and, with other like-minded officers, plotted to assassinate the *Führer*.

The first attempt was set for the Munich crisis in the spring of 1939, but when Britain and France gave way to Hitler's territorial demands in Czechoslovakia, thereby temporarily averting war, the conspirators lost their nerve and abandoned the plan.

All the same, Canaris apparently continued to work secretly against the Nazi regime. He was said to have established tentative contact with MI6, via his friends in Spain, dissuaded General Franco from entering the war on Germany's side, helped smuggle hundreds of Jews to Switzerland, and, when war eventually did break out in 1939, his initial espionage campaign against Britain was so amateurish as to suggest he was purposely sabotaging it.

Barely trained *Abwehr* agents were parachuted into England with little knowledge of the country. In one famous incident, a German agent walked into a country pub at nine in the morning shortly after landing and, utterly ignorant of British licensing laws, ordered a beer. Another was caught with a torch with German markings.

Faced with such inept opposition, MI5 was able to boast that by the end of 1940 every Nazi agent sent into Britain had been rounded up. The captured spies were offered a stark choice: work for Britain as double agents, feeding Canaris false information, or face the gallows. All but a small handful chose the former.

By 1942 Hitler had had enough of the *Abwehr*'s failures. With his credibility, and perhaps even his own life, on the line, Canaris knew he had to present the *Führer* with a major success – and fast.

Englandspiel

Ironically, it was his rivals in the Special Operations Executive who would unwittingly provide the lifeline, thanks to an astonishing series of blunders that handed Canaris Germany's greatest espionage coup of the war, one which the Admiral would later claim was 'one of the most remarkable feats in the history of espionage'.

Officially, it was called Operation North Pole, but it was more commonly known to the Germans as *Englandspiel* or 'England Game'. In early 1942, a Dutch SOE agent was captured by the Germans, who used radio direction-finding equipment to pinpoint the location of his transmissions to London. The *Abwehr* employed the same tactics as the British had, offering their captive the choice between death or becoming a double agent.

Under *Abwehr* control, the Dutchman continued sending messages back to his SOE superiors. To warn the British that he had been captured and was transmitting under duress, he left out the security codes at the start of each transmission, as he had been ordered to do in the event of capture.

Above SS and Gestapo head Heinrich Himmler. The Nazi police chief, convinced of Canaris's disloyalty, was able to persuade Hitler to have him executed in the wake of the failed July 1944 bomb plot.

But, incredibly, the omission was repeatedly ignored by London and SOE continued to parachute dozens of agents into compromised landing-zones, such that they fell straight into the hands of the Germans. Almost 50 agents were eventually bagged, most of whom were executed.

Shocking incompetence, or calculated treachery by a traitor within SOE's ranks? All files relating to the *Englandspiel* case were conveniently destroyed by a fire at SOE's Baker Street HQ at the end of the war, so the truth will probably never be known. But the net result was the virtual destruction of the British intelligence effort in Holland and a timely boost to the prestige of the *Abwehr* and its embattled leader.

Bomb plot

However, the admiral's reprieve would prove short-lived. He had many enemies in the Nazi hierarchy, the most dangerous of them Gestapo chief Heinrich Himmler, who had long suspected Canaris of undermining the Nazi cause. Finally, by February 1944, Himmler had convinced Hitler of Canaris's disloyalty and had him deposed as head of the *Abwehr*, his position now filled by the ambitious Walter Schellenberg, chief of the rival spy agency, the SD.

But Hitler still had some respect for the old admiral and could not yet bring himself to order his execution, opting merely to have him closely watched. His fate was finally sealed by the 20 July bomb plot, when Wehrmacht officer Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg tried to assassinate Hitler in his East Prussian command bunker, the Wolf's Lair. Hitler's ruthless retribution saw hundreds of officers whose loyalty was suspect rounded up and put to death.

There is no firm evidence that Canaris had any involvement in the plot. Indeed, he seemed genuinely shocked when informed of it, remarking: 'My God! Who did it? The Russians?' But his association with some of those who were involved was enough to condemn him.

After enduring a show trial, Canaris was sentenced to death and taken to Flossenburg, where he was held in a section of the camp known as 'The Bunker', reserved for high-profile political prisoners. There he was regularly beaten, before being hanged.

After playing a complex and dangerous game for ten years, his luck had finally run out. But even after so much time has passed since his death that bleak April morning, the enigma of Admiral Canaris remains as impenetrable as ever – which is probably just how the wily old spymaster would have wanted it.

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LINCOLN'S HIGHLANDERS

The 79th New York State Militia in the American Civil War.

Photo: Anne S K Brown Military Collection, Brown University, Rhode Island

Left Photographed prior to the Civil War, two of the 79th New York State Militia pose in Highland full dress complete with Glengarry bonnets, while Corporal William Beattie, seated at the centre, wears undress consisting of polka jacket and plaid pants, or trews. Besides his chevrons, Sergeant Robert S Gair (at the left) is distinguished by a non-commissioned officer's sword and waist sash. Born in Scotland, Gair became a multi-millionaire after the war, based on a paper-box and -bag business he established in Manhattan in 1864.

Ron Field uncovers the role of Scots Americans in the war to free the slaves.

In the wake of the failed Union attack on the Tower Battery at Secessionville on James Island, near Charleston, South Carolina, on 16 June 1862, the *Charleston Mercury* reported, 'It was left to the brave 79th Highlanders, to test the virtue of unadulterated cold steel on our Southern nerves. Thank God, Lincoln had only one 79th regiment.' In fact, the Union Army possessed several predominantly Scottish regiments between 1861 and 1865, mostly based on pre-war militia units.

Approximately 600,000 Scots migrated to the United States between 1851 and 1861, bringing with them a rich military tradition. Militia companies of Scottish origin wearing full Highland uniforms were formed in both Northern and Southern states, including Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Illinois, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

Referred to as the 'sons of auld Scotia', a company called the Scotch Light Infantry was organised at Albany, the capital city of New York State, in August 1851, and was one of the first American units to wear a uniform based on that of the British 42nd Highland Regiment, or Black Watch.

According to the 'By-Laws' of the Scotch Light Infantry, printed on 25 July 1854, they wore a 'Bonnet of black ostrich feathers, red hackle [or feather plume] and plaid band. Red coat, double breasted, with gold lace on the collar, cuffs, and skirts. Kilt of the Forty-second plaid. Spooran [*sic*] made of white hair, six black tassels, silver or German silver top [or cantle], with the Goddess of Liberty in the centre and a star at each end. Hose of red and white plaid. Shoes and silver buckles.'

Highlanders for the Union

In Chicago, Illinois, the Highland Guard commanded by Captain John McArthur wore 'the regular old style, with red frock coats, tartans, huge overhanging caps, bare continuations, and other paraphernalia' when first organised in 1856. With the outbreak of Civil War in April 1861, this company formed the nucleus of the 12th Illinois Infantry, or 'First Scotch Regiment', with McArthur as colonel.

Although the 12th Illinois received state-issue uniforms of grey at the beginning of its war service and later wore blue, its headgear until at least 1862 consisted of a Scottish tam-o'-shanter with tartan, or plaid, band.

The 12th Illinois sustained heavy losses at Fort Donelson, Shiloh, and Corinth in 1862. In the defence of Allatoona, Georgia, on 5 October 1864, it suffered 57 casualties among its remaining 161 men. Survivors and replacements marched to the sea with General William Tecumseh Sherman, and then into the Carolinas to finish the war.

First organised in New York City during November 1858, a Highland

> The *Charleston Mercury* reported, 'Thank God, Lincoln had only one 79th regiment.'

regiment was subsequently designated the 79th New York State Militia, named after the 79th Regiment, Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, of the British Army. Adopting the Cameron of Erracht tartan, which was specially shipped from Scotland, this regiment first paraded in undress uniform composed of 'plaid pants, polka jackets and small caps' on 17 September 1860.

The uniform was further described by the regimental historian William Todd as consisting of 'handsome State [blue] jackets with red facings, blue fatigue caps and Cameron tartan pants'. In February 1860, a few members of the 79th paraded in kilts for a Grand Military Fete held in New York City, and B Company of the regiment – dressed in 'kilts, polka jackets, plaid stockings and bright buckled shoes' – escorted Elmer Ellsworth and the Chicago Zouave Cadets on their departure from the city six months later.

The 79th musters for war

With the onset of Civil War, the 79th NYSM was increased in size to 895 officers and men, and mustered into Federal service on 29 May 1861, with many new recruits of Irish as well as Scottish origin. At this stage, the regiment found great difficulty in providing its whole complement with kilted full dress. According to William Todd, 'All of the officers and many of the men wore the kilts while the rest [or new recruits]... were dressed in handsome State jackets with red facings, blue fatigue caps and Cameron tartan pants.'

With the arrival of the regiment at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, *en route* for Washington DC, the *Inquirer* newspaper reported, 'The different companies were somewhat diversified as to style of uniform, but the national plaid marked all. Some were accoutred [*sic*] in the full Highland costume, kilt and bare knees, others were in plaid pants.' When the regiment took part in the review of New York troops at the Federal capital in July 1861, only three or four of the officers wore 'the full Highland rig'.

In a last effort to provide the whole of the 79th New York with complete Highland dress, Lieutenant-Colonel Samuel Elliott wrote to the *New York Tribune* in July 1861, 'I purpose going to New York on furlough to attend to the unfinished business of the regiment, which may occupy me some time, as I am anxious to obtain pipers, for whom I may have to go to Canada, and also to procure kilts for the entire regiment, without which the Highlander is shorn of half his martial spirit and all his martial splendors.'

Battle honours

When McDowell's army began its march to Manassas Junction prior to the Battle of First Bull Run four days later, Elliott clearly had had no time to fulfil his mission. Of that occasion William Todd wrote, 'At two o'clock in the afternoon in "light marching order" the march began; our knapsacks containing our uniform jackets and tartan pants... having been packed and left at camp in charge of the "Invalid Corps". If any of our men wore anything other than the regulation dark blue blouses and light blue pants during the campaign... they were few.'

The 79th Highlanders fought bravely at Bull Run and later at Secessionville, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Vicksburg, the Wilderness, and Petersburg. They became one of the most respected units from New York City during the Civil War, and earned themselves a fearsome reputation on the battlefield, where they lost 190 men killed in action or died of disease, and 747 discharged because of wounds or sickness, from a total roster of 1,374.

At the end of the conflict in 1865, the 79th returned to New York City, where they reverted to militia status and carried on their proud Highland military tradition.

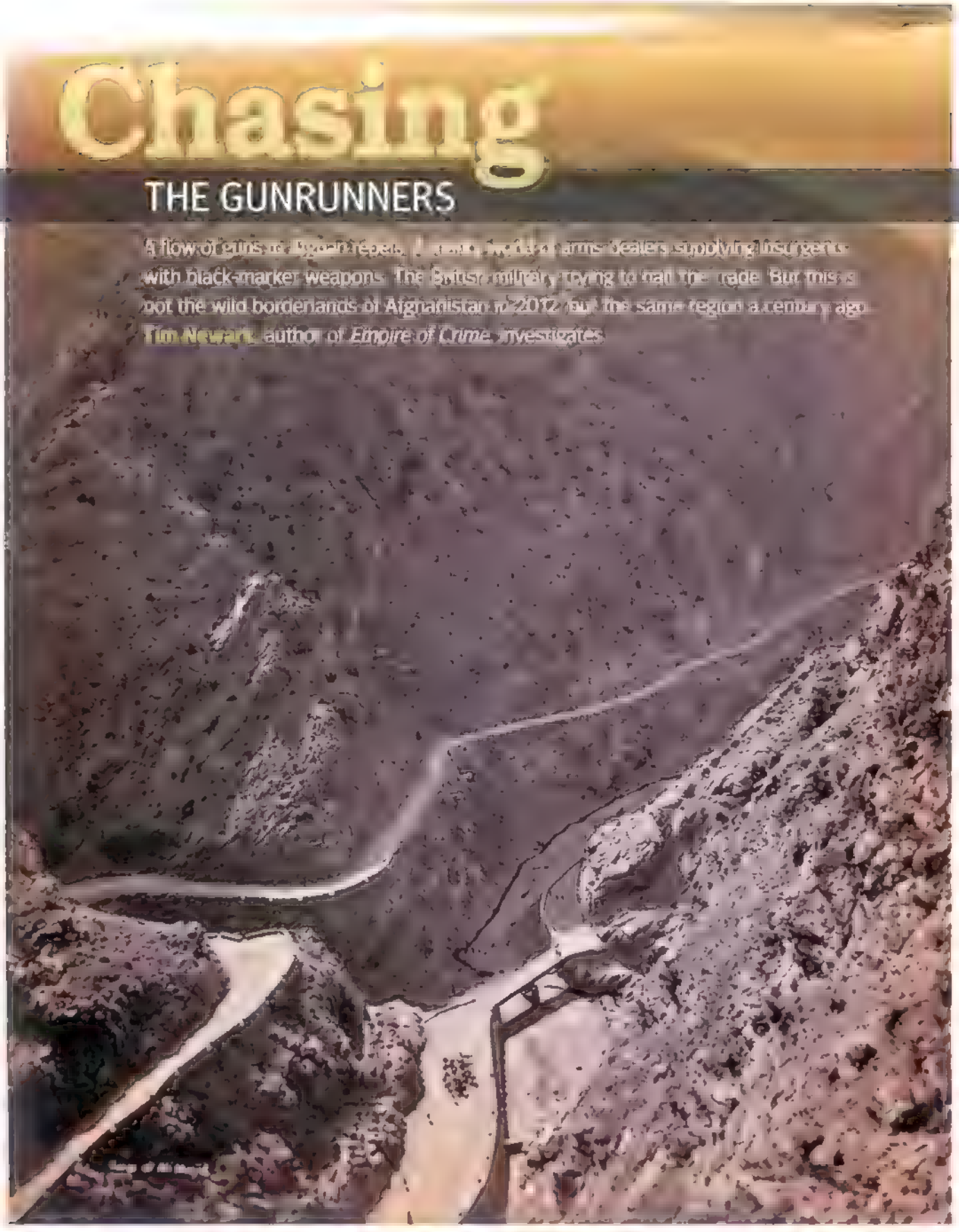
Above Formed in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1857, the Highland Guard wore a uniform based on that of the 42nd Highland Regiment of Foot, or Black Watch. The American origin of this officer is revealed by his militia-pattern shoulder belt-plate, which displays a seated 'Columbia', or 'Lady Liberty'. Also, the cantle, or plate, on his sporran includes palmetto trees as part of its device, although this detail has been painted by the photographer's artist to look like part of a rectangular belt-plate. Although the Highland Guard of South Carolina disbanded in 1860, a Confederate Scottish company called the Union Light Infantry fought against the 79th Highlanders at Secessionville in June 1862.

Right This unidentified member of the 12th Illinois Volunteers, also known as 'The First Scotch Regiment', wears an example of the tam-o'-shanter with plaid band worn by his regiment until at least 1862. The 12th Illinois was led by Colonel John McArthur, who had previously commanded the Highland Guard, a Scottish volunteer militia company organised in Chicago in 1856.

Photos: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division; sixth-plate ambrotype in the author's collection

Chasing
THE GUNRUNNERS

A flow of guns in Afghan rebels' hands has led to arms dealers supplying insurgents with black-market weapons. The British military trying to halt the trade. But this is not the wild borderlands of Afghanistan in 2012, but the same region a century ago. Tim Newark, author of *Empire of Crime*, investigates.



The tribesmen were gaining the upper hand because they were importing high-precision modern rifles.

The rugged land that hides Islamic insurgents today on the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan is the same mountainous terrain that won notoriety a hundred years ago as the North-West Frontier. Throughout the 19th century, the never ending conflict on the North-West Frontier was part of the Great Game – the strategic rivalry between the British and Russian Empires – in which the British feared a Russian invasion of India through Afghanistan.

The Russians had effectively conquered the Muslim states of Central Asia, and it seemed only a matter of time before they would exploit the continuing tribal conflict on the North-West Frontier to grab 'the Jewel in the Crown' from Queen Victoria.

But this was a chimera that played better in London clubs as an excuse for increasing arms expenditure in India, because the reality was that Russian influence on the people of this region was negligible. The volatility of the borderland was down to the tribesmen themselves and their hunger for weapons – and, by the early 20th century, they were gaining the upper hand over the British because they were importing high-precision modern rifles.

Rifles and feuds

The tribesmen of this embattled region – now known as Afghans – are, in fact, mainly Pathans, among them Afridis, Wazirs, and Mahsuds. Living on the fringe of the British Empire, they inhabited a mountainous land of poor agriculture and had to rely on their wits and weaponry to grow rich. For centuries they had lived primarily as raiders, stealing goods from their neighbours. By 1900, their one great advantage was their proximity to the imperial frontier, which meant they could benefit from smuggling arms to and from India.

The fury of the Pathans was not always directed at outsiders. For most of the time, indeed, it was aimed at themselves as feuding tribes and families competed with each other to dominate the region and gain the most from their banditry.

'A rifle to a hill Pathan is literally the breath of life,' noted a British Commissioner in 1901. 'If, for instance, I have a breech-loader and my enemy with whom I am at a blood feud has none he must get it or go under. There are no two ways about it.'

Such was the demand for weaponry that most Pathans remained poor, as any excess income was spent on guns.

Guns in coffins

The Pathan desire for modern European-manufactured rifles was fed at first by a network of smuggling across the border from India or outright theft from Indian Army depots. 'Coffins had been successfully employed to convey rifles across the frontier under the very eyes of unsuspecting militia patrols,' said one reporter. 'In Calcutta rifles had been strapped under goods-wagons destined for Peshawar, whence they were secretly carried off by natives on arrival. Ammunition had gone through the Khyber cleverly concealed in bales of merchandise. Bolts had disappeared mysteriously from arms-racks.'

British soldiers sometimes succumbed to temptation, selling their rifles to dealers, netting up to £25 for a Martini-Henry. In 1898, a Private Gilchrest of the Royal Scots Fusiliers was sentenced to two years' hard labour for selling a rifle-bolt to an undercover Border Military Policeman. Such were the rewards from the illicit trade that a substantial number of weapons were also imported through the Middle East.

'Some think they are imported from Birmingham or Belgium, and thence find their way via the Persian Gulf to the Indian frontier,' surmised a correspondent in the *London Times*. 'Some imagine that they are obtained from the Amir's workshop in Cabul; and some believe they are stolen in India, and ▷

Left A perilous road through the Khyber Pass around 1910: the North-West Frontier of India was a rugged mountainous region populated by militant hill-tribesmen. A modern rifle was a prized possession, and the returns on arms-smuggling were high.
Right An image of the North-West Frontier's Indian Army defenders from around the same time.

Images © Peter Newark's Military Pictures and WIPL

Left The British Raj at ease: arms-smuggling was a threat to the security of 'the Jewel in the Crown' of the British Empire.

Below left Pathan tribesmen on the North-West Frontier, c.1910.

sold for fancy prices across the border. Probably from each of these sources the supply is maintained, but, whencesoever they get them, it is certain that the Afridis now possess Martinis in large numbers, and have besides an apparently unlimited stock of ammunition. They have, too, a good many Sniders, the bullets of which inflict frightful shattering wounds; and in the recent operations they obtained 40 or 50 Lee-Metfords, and made uncommon good use of them.'

Bottomless demand

As the British tightened up control on the flow of illicit weapons from within India to the North-West Frontier, so the trade route from the Middle East became more important. In April 1899, George Roos-Keppel, then a Captain on Special Duty in the Kurram Valley, told the Secretary of the Government of India that he had bought two carbines, one made in London, the other in Birmingham, from a tribesman who claimed he could supply him with many more.

These had not come from India, but from the longer route via the Persian Gulf. It was well worthwhile. A weapon bought at the port of Muscat in Oman could be sold for many times more by the time it reached the Pathan tribesmen.

As word got back to Europe of the fortunes to be made selling weapons in Muscat, so Belgian, French, and German arms-dealers joined the British who already had a strong presence there. These European gun-sellers professed they had no idea where the weapons ended up, only that the Arabs had a bottomless desire for them. Rather than depending on native dhows, the merchants were helped considerably when the Hamburg-American Packet Company started operating steamers across the Gulf from 1906. Afghan arms-caravans awaited the shipments on the other side, on the Makran Coast of Persia, present-day Iran.

Army surplus

By 1907, some 94,000 Martini-Henry rifles had arrived from the Persian Gulf into Afghanistan for sale to Pathan warriors. A year later, it was estimated that a further 30,000 rifles and three million rounds of ammunition were arriving each year.

An example of the far-flung network was revealed when a large number of breech-loading rifles, disposed of by the Australian Government of New South

Right British and Sikh soldiers under attack on the North-West Frontier, c1900. The painting is by F A Stewart.

Wales after the Boer War, ended up on the North-West Frontier with the New South Wales stamp still on them. Not only did such a significant influx of modern weapons threaten security on the North-West Frontier, but if these arms got into the hands of dissidents within India, they might fuel a rebellion against British imperial rule over the entire Subcontinent.

Through diligent intelligence gathering, it was Roos-Keppel who reported to the Government of India the exact route taken by some of these arms-smugglers from the North-West Frontier. His agent in the Khyber underlined how difficult it was to get hold of the facts: 'As a penalty of 2,000 rupees and the burning of the offender's house has been fixed by the tribe to prevent information concerning the method of the trade reaching the ears of the government, first-hand information is not yet easy to acquire.'

But the agent learned of a trip undertaken by a Pathan tribe – the Adam Khel Afridi. They had previously stood aloof from the business of arms-smuggling, preferring to manufacture their own weapons, but this trade was being undermined by the superior, cheaper European guns flowing into their realm from across the Middle East.

Smuggling operations

From their richest merchants they gathered 48,000 rupees, and 56 tribesmen set off in September 1908 on the long journey. They travelled in smaller, separate parties with the money hidden in their clothing. In Karachi, one group was caught changing their silver for gold and were arrested for suspected arms-dealing. The rest set sail for the port of Sohar in the Gulf of Oman. They then marched 14 days to Muscat.

> British soldiers sometimes succumbed, selling their rifles and netting up to £25 for a Martini-Henry.

'On arrival at Muscat they found themselves in a market which offered free trade in rifles and ammunition at cheap rates,' said the agent.

They selected the rifles, paid for them, had them wrapped in bundles, but they could not take them away. The Muscat traders told the Adam Khel to leave them behind and travel to a point on the opposite shore of the Gulf of Oman, outside Persian government control. There, they might have to wait up to three months before they would see their valuable cargo.

The Pathan tribesmen must have wondered at the wisdom of this in a region renowned for its lawlessness. But they had little choice. The Muscat traders said the delay was 'rendered necessary by the vigilance of those who sought to hamper the trade'.

A camel caravan

The Adam Khel did as they were told and found a spot on the Persian coast where the people lived in caves and were able to sell them camels. After waiting for about a fortnight, several rowing boats appeared bearing their consignment of guns. The relieved Afridis were impressed by the honest business dealings of the Muscat traders. With the bundles loaded on their camels, the caravan set off in early January for the land route to Kabul.

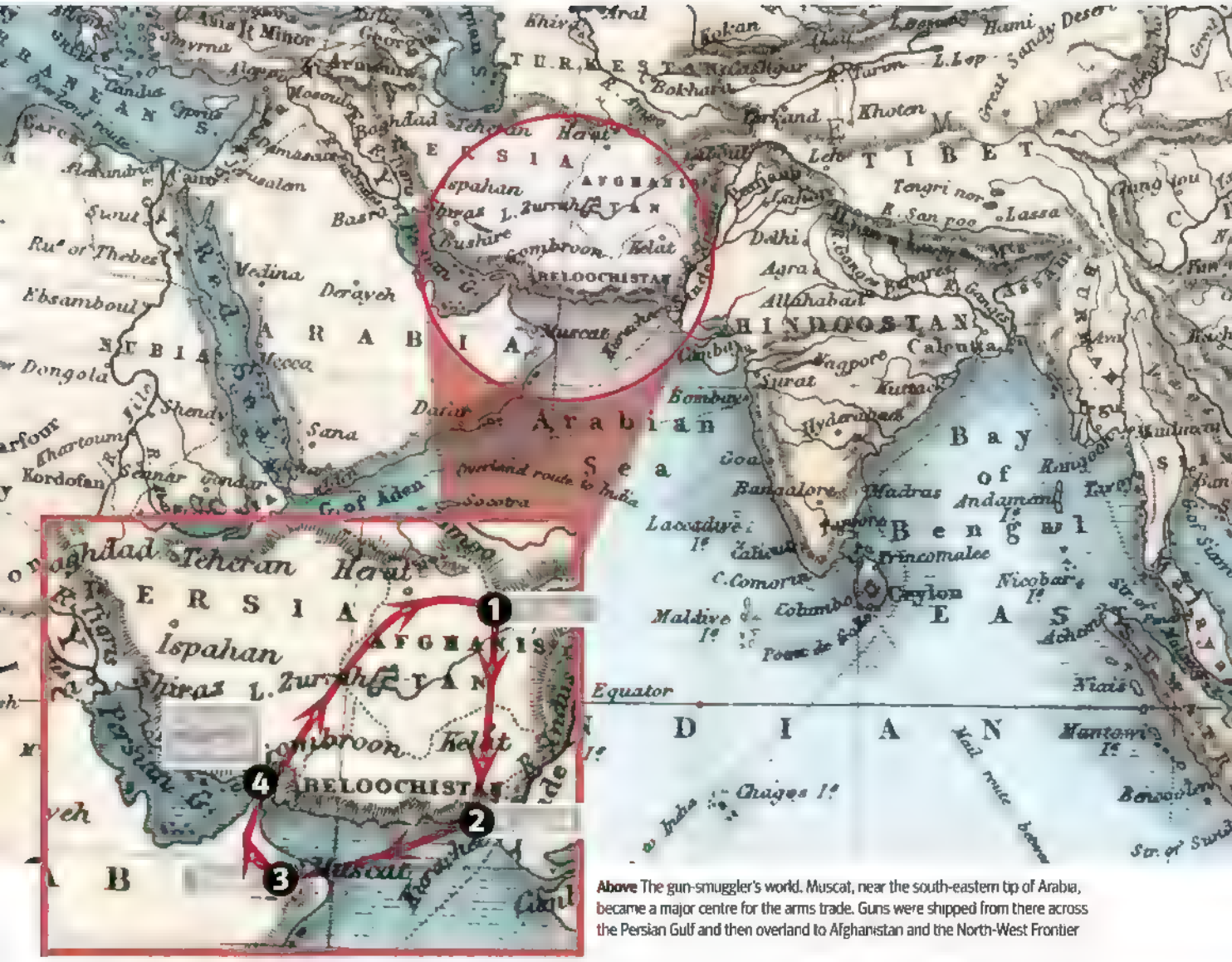
'The caravan marched for four months,' said the agent, 'encountering many difficulties in the shape of difficult roads and lack of water, but nowhere suffering from attack.' At one stage, they went three days without water, but, eventually, they reached Kabul. The camels were sold in the market, and the tribesmen were each given ten rupees to cover their expenses.

Altogether the Adam Khel expedition brought in about 1,000 rifles and 120 pistols, reported Roos-Keppel. In Muscat, they had bought a German-made Mauser rifle for 80 rupees. Back home on the North-West Frontier, it sold for 320 rupees. A British-made Martini-Henry rifle was bought for 55 rupees in Muscat and sold for 200 rupees. The cost of importing each weapon was fixed at roughly 20 rupees above the Muscat price.

'The success of the venture has greatly elated the Adam Khel,' concluded the Khyber agent. A similar venture on larger scale was planned for the following autumn.

The Royal Navy intervenes

Gun-smuggling was turning into a gold rush. Something had to be done, and in 1909 the Indian Government, spurred ▷



Above The gun-smuggler's world. Muscat, near the south-eastern tip of Arabia, became a major centre for the arms trade. Guns were shipped from there across the Persian Gulf and then overland to Afghanistan and the North-West Frontier

by reports such as that received from Roos-Keppel, took military action

The Royal Navy supplied five warships to blockade the Makran Coast running from the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman. Consignments of weapons were seized from native dhows and the flow of weapons was interrupted to the extent that Pathan arms-dealers lost considerable sums of money. It resulted in them turning to their traditional methods of raising cash – with an upsurge of raids across the North-West Frontier in 1910

The naval action created a sense of tension in the Persian Gulf and, when sailors from HMS *Hyacinth* landed at Dubai to search for illicit weapons in December 1910, they were attacked by a gang of locals. Five of the seamen were killed and nine wounded in the clash

A possible explanation for this was published shortly afterwards in *The Times of India*, where it was stated that the Arab press was exacerbating the situation by claiming that the British were so fed up with the illegal arms-trade they were going to carve up Persia and then annex Arabia.

'These apprehensions have induced an increasing anti-foreign feeling, which has been intensified by the belief that our measures against the arms traffic are intended to lead to the disarmament of the Arabs, who cling to their rifles as their most cherished possessions.'

The article concluded 'The Press demands that renewed attempts shall be made to suppress the Muscat traffic itself.'

High-tech communications

By 1911, the Royal Navy patrols in the Persian Gulf had gained the upper hand in their war against the gunrunners. Part of this was thanks to their use of advanced communications technology

'Wireless telegraphy may be said to have almost doubled the effectiveness of the squadron for its present purpose,' noted a special correspondent for *The Times* embedded with the patrol fleet. 'Very few dhows can escape its vigilance. Every one met with is overhauled and thoroughly searched. If arms are found they are immediately seized and the dhow taken in tow'

It was painstaking, tedious work. One ship searched 97 dhows before making a single arrest, but it proved to be one of the largest captures recorded – over 2,000 rifles and piles of ammunition

For the crew of the smaller boats deployed, it could be a challenging mission, as *The Times* reporter made clear. 'It is no child's play for a young officer and a crew of 12 or 14 men to be turned out for a cruise of several weeks' duration, come fair weather or foul, in a small cutter or pinnace, with little or no shelter from the fierce tropical sun or from the sudden squalls which

constantly lash those wind-swept waters – and sometimes a Hobson's choice between an ugly sea outside and the dubious refuge of a creek with a party of truculent Afghans on the shore ready to receive them with loaded rifles.'

A British expeditionary force

Arnold Keppel was the 8th Earl of Albemarle, a British soldier, and a distant cousin of Roos-Keppel, to whom he dedicated his book on the link between gunrunning and the North-West Frontier. He joined a 1,000-strong expeditionary force that landed on the Makran Coast in April 1911.

Consisting of British Indian Army units, including the 104th Wellesley's Rifles, armed with two machine-guns, and the 32nd Mountain Battery, it was led by Colonel Walter Delamain. Their mission was to push through the Marak Gorge, held by tribesmen loyal to the Baluch gunrunning gang leader Mir Barkat, and provoke a confrontation.

'For mile after mile the column forced its way through the deep sand which filled the bed of a shrunken stream,' recalled Arnold Keppel. 'The day was hot and the heat was accentuated by the funnel-like defile into which the sun shone at an almost vertical angle.' The gunrunning bandits had withdrawn before the advancing British. 'Suddenly a muffled shot was heard somewhere ahead, another, then another.'

Scouts located some tribesmen in the gorge hidden behind *sangars* – piles of stones turned into field fortifications. The vanguard of the 104th Rifles immediately engaged them until the main force arrived, supported by the 32nd Mountain Battery. Under their covering fire, the British Indian units pressed the bandits back.

'Each line was successively carried, while the intermittent "cough, cough" of the machine-guns followed the retreating force across the open spaces. Each shell from the ten-pounders as it burst on the hillside laid bare a conspicuous round bare patch of blue clay. Many burst right over the *sangars*.'

The fight lasted for almost three hours until midday. By then, three sepoys had been injured, with eight of the 200-strong bandit gang killed and 24 wounded. One of their leaders had been especially conspicuous, wearing a red *puggaree* on his head, and was shot through both thighs. Their chief, Mir Barkat, was not present, but it was judged that the clash had dented his reputation and reduced his ability to recruit more men.

Above Fighting on India's North-West Frontier was a battle against both mountain guerrillas and the mountains themselves. Here, British officers supervise military road-building.

London profiteers

Back in London, there was some criticism of the measures taken to stop the gun-smugglers. 'The cost of the preventive operations in the last two years, exclusive of the operations this season, had been £220,000,' said one critic, speaking to the Central Asian Society. 'It seems bad policy to incur the cost of these endless preventive measures, which must be indefinitely continued... I say nothing of the extraordinary position created by the mobilisation of a British squadron to prevent the transit of arms, some of which are still being shipped in the Thames.'

This was the problem – too many Europeans were making too much money out of the business. The Sultan of Oman was willing to stop the trade, but he wanted to be compensated for the £20,000 of annual revenue he would lose.

> Wireless telegraphy almost doubled the effectiveness of the squadron.

The lack of willingness displayed by the British Government in London to grasp this problem and crack down on their own arms manufacturers meant that the army of the Indian Government continued to suffer. 'We shall see our soldiers shot down with rifles some of which were made in England, and exported from England,' said the critic. 'It was in 1897 that the existence of the traffic was revealed, and it was in 1907 that, too late, the first really practical steps were taken to prevent it.'

A further twist to this crooked business was exposed by a colonel who had served on the North-West Frontier. He wondered how the tribesmen found the money to buy all the modern arms flooding into the region. 'They were not a wealthy people,' he said, 'but they must have spent many thousands of pounds upon the purchase of these arms.'

'A great deal of this money came from the Indian Treasury. The subsidies from the Indian Exchequer [used to buy the compliance of the tribesmen] were almost invariably laid out in the strengthening of their military position – so that we not only supplied the tribesmen with arms of British manufacture, but we gave them the money to buy them.'

Despite the evident hypocrisy of the situation, the direct action of the British Indian Government in the Persian Gulf did have some impact on the gun-smugglers and made the cost of buying guns from Muscat rise to a price where it became less attractive to the Pathans. Nevertheless, it was a sad reality that the commercial interests of British and European home governments outweighed the security concerns of their colonial governments and those serving on the frontiers of empire.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

For 17 years the editor of *Military Illustrated*, **Tim Newark** is the author of numerous military history books, including *Highlander* (Constable) and his latest, *Empire of Crime* (Mainstream). See *www.timnewark.com* for more details.

THE ROYAL STAR & GARTER HOMES

MHM's homage to Britain's war charities and the people they support.

Continuing our regular feature profiling military charities, *MHM* focuses on a 96-year-old organisation dedicated to rehabilitating disabled ex-soldiers.

Above Royal Star & Garter residents in 1916.

For nearly 100 years, The Royal Star & Garter Homes charity has been caring for disabled ex-Service men and women. Its philosophy has been constant; to provide outstanding nursing and therapeutic care to enable those cared for to enjoy life to the full.

The charity was established in 1916 by Queen Mary and The British Women's Hospital Committee, working with the British Red Cross Society, to care for severely disabled young men returning from the battlegrounds of the First World War.

When it opened its doors at the old Star & Garter Hotel on Richmond Hill, Surrey, the average age of those admitted was just 22. From the start the charity showed innovation in care, offering 'masseuses' (physiotherapists), 'hobbies' (occupational therapy), and 'elocutionists' (speech therapists).

The emphasis on rehabilitation continued through the Second World War when a new generation of Servicemen were helped. They benefitted from the pioneering work of Dr Ludwig Guttmann, who worked at Richmond from 1946 to 1976. He introduced intensive physiotherapy and promoted sports to build strength and confidence. In 1948, Dr Guttmann organised what would become the first Paralympic Games, with patients from Stoke Mandeville and The Royal Star & Garter taking part.

Ron Hill, who is 92 and lives at the Richmond Home, was one of Dr Guttmann's patients at Stoke Mandeville and remembers him well. Ron, who had been seriously wounded in the D-Day landings, recalls: 'Before, you were left to lie in bed. Then Dr Guttmann came and got you up in a wheelchair. I used to swim before I was injured, so he got me swimming. It gave you the will to live.'

Over the years, The Royal Star & Garter Homes has evolved to care for all disabled ex-Service men and women, and their partners. The charity maintains its strong military links, and has enjoyed Royal patronage since its foundation, including Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II since 1953.

With 21st-century medical advances, more Service people are, thankfully, surviving injury into older age, which means The Royal Star & Garter Homes has adapted to meet changing care demands. With the increased need to provide 24-hour nursing and respite care within a homely environment, particularly for those living with dementia, the charity has begun a programme to build new, purpose-built modern homes that can provide truly person-centred care.

Mike Barter, Chief Executive, says, 'We all owe a great debt to veterans and their families, which is why The Royal Star & Garter Homes provides the level of care, friendship, and respect they deserve. We understand that having hope and purpose in life is important to us all, which is why we strive to enable those we care for to be as independent as possible and live life to the full.

'We are determined to provide brilliant care to the military family for generations to come, and we are deeply grateful for the generosity of our supporters, without whom we simply could not develop our new care-home strategy.'

The Royal Star & Garter Homes
Caring for the nation's military family since 1916

Further information

As a registered charity, The Royal Star & Garter Homes are heavily reliant on voluntary contributions. For more information or to donate to RS&G, go to *www.starandgarter.org* or call 0845 370 7500.

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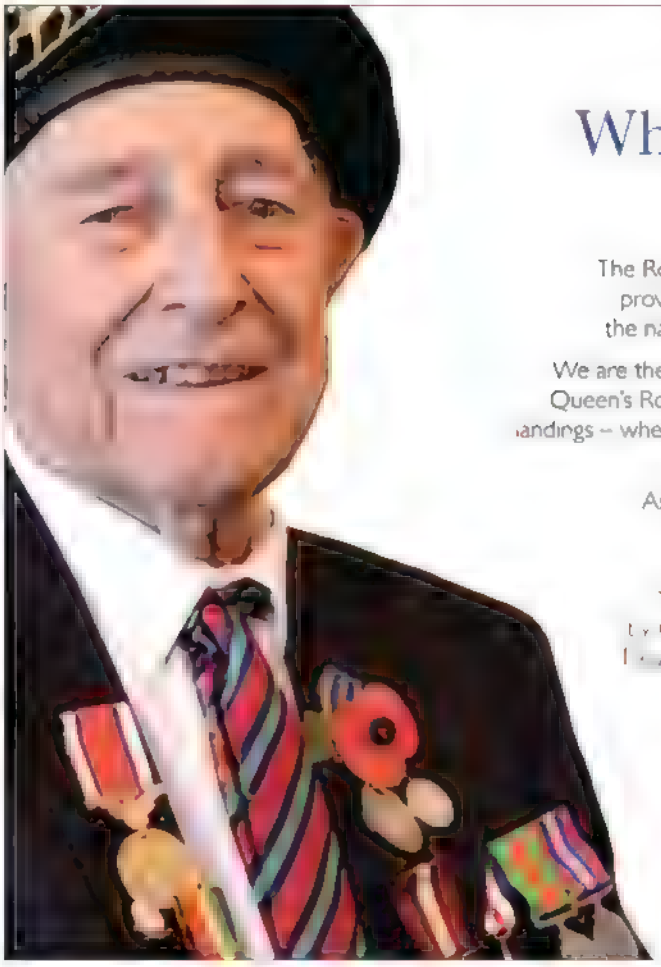


When his country needed him, Ron was there.

The Royal Star & Garter Homes is a charity that provides brilliant care to disabled members of the nation's military family with high care needs

We are there for people like Ron, who served in the Queen's Royal Regiment and took part in the D-Day landings – where he was seriously wounded by shrapnel We help him live life to the full

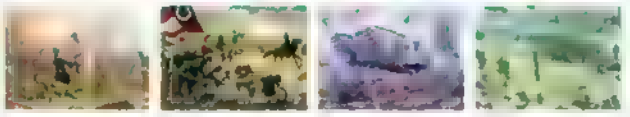
As a charity, we do not receive any direct government funding and rely on the generosity of our supporters to fund the high level of specialist care that we provide

You can show your appreciation for Ron and others like him by making a donation to The Royal Star & Garter Homes today Please call 0845 370 7500, email donations@starandgarter.org or visit www.starandgarter.org

The Royal Star & Garter Homes

Caring for the nation's military family since 1916

give with confidence



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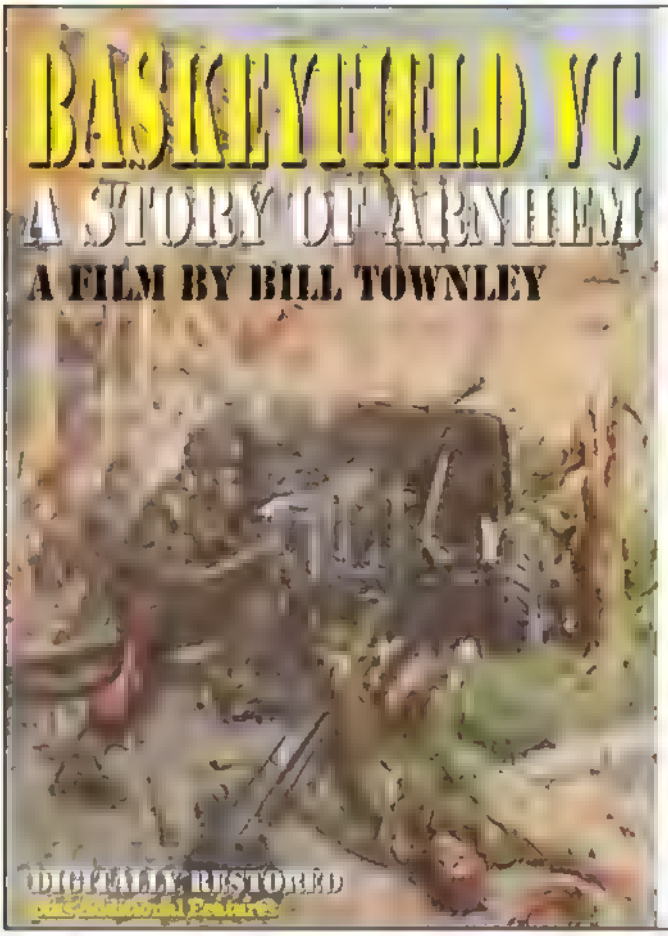


New Feature-length DVD in Cinemascope

Staffordshire Film Archive

BASKEYFIELD VC

While defending the Oosterbeek perimeter three days into the battle of Arnhem, John Baskeyfield commanded a pair of anti tank guns that destroyed several enemy tanks before the crews were killed. Baskeyfield subsequently fired the guns alone before he too was killed. He was Stoke-on-Trent's only VC of the War, and Bill's 1969 film paved the way for the City to pay tribute to his heroism by erecting a statue in the City.

Painstakingly restored and digitised by Ray Johnson of Staffordshire Film Archive, the film has location extras showing how and where the film was made, interviews, production photographs and pages of the original script and storyboards. Order online by Google Checkout from Staffordshire Film Archive (£12.99 inc p&p):-

www.filmarchive.org.uk

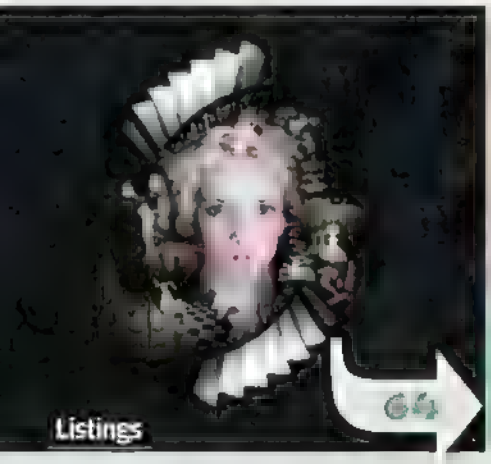
JANUARY 2013

On Manoeuvres

DATES TO REMEMBER
THIS JANUARY

January A new month, a new year, a new set of engaging military-history activities to suit beginners, families, and academics. The Stoneleigh Park Militaria Fair offers a range of WWI and WWII military ephemera, and is a great way to meet like-minded enthusiasts. Or try any of our selection of lectures, tours, and exhibitions, which in this issue cover Douglas Haig, Florence Nightingale, and Henry Stewart. Recommended events include the fiery Viking festival in Lerwick, Up Helly Aa, while the MFT Weekend Bootcamp is the perfect way to blow out those Christmas cobwebs and shift the mince pies. For a fun family day out, the Tower of London's 'Life in the Medieval Palace' is the one to choose.

Our reviewer of foreign military museums, Richard Lucas, found himself in Istanbul this month, where he visited Askeri Müze. This national military museum is teeming with striking treasures, and puts on mesmerising historical re-enactments every afternoon.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DATES TO REMEMBER

MUSEUM TOUR

KENSINGTON'S CREEPS

£25 ENTRY

EVENT

New Year's Resolution

If you're looking for a military camp to kickstart your 2013 fitness regime, Military Fitness Training is here to ensure you get on track – and enjoy doing it too, with five different workouts.

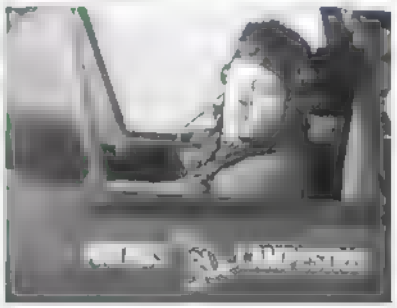
The instructors' real army experience will give you a taste of military life. You might get a bit muddy, but you'll head straight for a hot shower afterwards. Plus the health and nutrition workshops unravel food-industry myths to help you pick a good, but not boring, diet. The price includes accommodation at a Holiday Inn.

£250 TICKETS

EXHIBITION

£11.80 ENTRY

LECTURE



***Pipit*'s message**

Author and speaker Carol Harris will be introducing the wartime film *Tawny Pipit*. Following the film, she will talk about the creation of the film and the propaganda elements that it contains. There are rumours of popcorn and ice-cream too – for a true cinema experience!

£3 ENTRY

FAIR

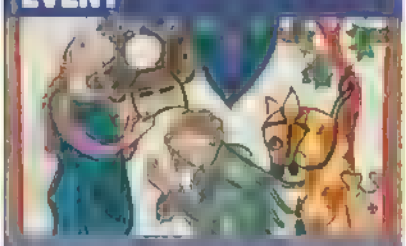
Stoneleigh's military swag

Be sure to take this opportunity to see a wide range of quality military collectables, including British, American, German, and Russian artefacts. Stoneleigh Park's militaria fairs have a famously diverse range of exhibits. This year, expect everything from uniforms, weapons, and medals to books and manuals, models, military vehicles and parts, aviation and radio equipment, and WWII clothing

Militaria 2013

£10 ENTRY

EVENT



£18 ENTRY

CELEBRITY SPEAKER

Haig's ways questioned

Douglas Haig is the single most controversial general in military history. Fêted as a victor in 1918, within 15 years his reputation had collapsed, and despite the efforts of some military historians, it has never fully recovered. In this lecture, one of Britain's leading historians, Professor Gary Sheffield, assesses how much credit Haig deserves for victory on the Western Front. A concessionary rate is available to SOFNAM members, students, seniors, and service personnel.

Douglas Haig: was he the accidental victor in 1918?

£10 ENTRY

FESTIVAL

Amazing blaze

The abiding influence of the Vikings, who arrived in Shetland just over 1,000 years ago, is celebrated on the last Tuesday of January with the largest fire festival in Europe – 'Up Helly Aa' After a torchlight procession of up to a thousand 'guizers' through the streets of Lerwick, a full-size replica Viking longship is ceremonially burned. All the guizers and onlookers then return to local halls for a night of revelry, dancing, and partying.

FREE ENTRY

MUSEUM TOUR

Medicine through the ages

The 'Nuns, Nurses, and Nightingales' museum tour takes visitors through the history of healing skills, starting with the role of women in a Medieval hospital and going on to the skills held by an educated lady of the manor.

The tour explains the role of Florence Nightingale during the Crimean War, where she was so appalled by the lack of proper medical facilities that she sought to change the way in which British soldiers were treated by introducing new standards of care and sanitation.

This event promises to be fascinating, covering a compelling historical subject and delving into the lives of inspiring people.

Nuns, Nurses, and Nightingales

15 January

183 Euston Road

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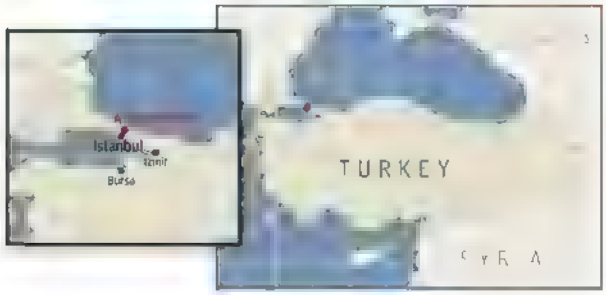
www.wellcomecollection.org

FREE ENTRY

Askeri Müze, Istanbul

[redacted] reports on one of Europe's less well-known national military museums.



Located on the crossroads between Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, Istanbul has one of the richest histories of any city in the world. A large part of that history is a tale of conquest and defence, of military action and innovation, and of innumerable troop movements. For over four centuries, Istanbul was the centre of the mighty Ottoman Empire.

With temples, cathedrals, mosques, and its many museums, Istanbul has literally hundreds of heritage sites to visit. The sheer number can be overwhelming, but one that should not be overlooked, especially by anyone interested military history, is Askeri Müze, the Istanbul Military Museum. It has an enormous collection dedicated to over 1,000 years of Turkish military history. Dating back to the 19th century, it is one of the leading museums of its kind in the world.

The museum opened initially in 1846 in St Irene Church, which had been converted into an armoury after the Ottoman capture of the city in 1453. It was moved in 1950 to the First Army Headquarters in Harbiye, not far from Taksim Square. The Harbiye district (an Ottoman derivation from the Arabic word *harb*, meaning warfare) was the site of the Ottoman imperial military academy, the empire's West Point or Sandhurst. The famed Turkish leader Kemal Atatürk studied here, and a room in the museum is, unsurprisingly, dedicated to him.

The Turks

To get to the museum, you take a bus or taxi from Taksim Square north up Cumhuriyet Avenue as far as Valikonagi Avenue. A walk through the gardens surrounding the main building is not only pleasant but interesting: you have a snack bar, and all around the building is a large collection of Ottoman cannon and mortars, a rail gun, helicopters, aircraft, and military vehicles.

The military museum was renovated and reopened in its present building in 1993, with a successful and contemporary exhibition concept. Today, in 22 rooms, about 9,000 pieces from the Ottoman era through to the Second World War are shown. The museum holds striking historical treasures, such as the chain that the Byzantines stretched across the mouth of the Golden Horn to keep out the Sultan's navy during the Siege of Constantinople in 1453.

The exhibits open with interactive maps giving the visitor an overview of the military history of the region and the empire. On the ground floor, the earliest weapons used by the Turkic tribes are on display, with collections of the bows and arrows used by the famed Mongol and Turkic horse-archers. This is followed by rooms containing the curved daggers and lancets and other regalia of the cavalry, as well as the weapons carried by foot soldiers of the period. As you progress through the centuries, paintings and costumed mannequins illustrate the soldiers and battles of different eras.

At its peak, in the early 16th century, the Ottoman Empire stretched from Eastern Europe and the Balkans to the shores of the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, and across North Africa. Armour and

1. Model cavalry in the Riding Hall.
2. Ancient European axes in the collection of bladed weapons.
3. Cannon at the entrance to the museum.
4. One of the afternoon concerts by Janissary band Mehter Takimi.
5. Ornamental spear on display in the Bladed Weapons Hall.

weapons from the various territories are on display. Weaponry of the early Islamic, Iranian, Caucasian, European, and Turkish periods, and a unique collection of helmets and armour, both for men and horse, make this one of the most extensive collections of its kind in the world.

The Janissaries

Several rooms are devoted to the Janissaries. The Janissaries, or 'new soldiers', were primarily Christian youths taken from conquered lands in the Balkans and Eastern Europe and impressed into military service. They were taught Turkish, converted to Islam, and educated in the empire's schools. Leading a life of strict military discipline, they made up the core of the Sultan's army, were paid wages, and were on active duty in times of both war and peace. In many ways, they were the first modern professional military force.

Trained to proficiency in military skills, the Janissaries formed elite units of commandos, engineers, artillerymen, and sappers. Many became officers and obtained high positions in the Ottoman government. Their distinctive uniforms and arms on display here make this one of the most exciting parts of the museum.

On the upper floor are rooms with objects, weapons, and uniforms from the First World War (especially Gallipoli), the Second World War, and the Korean War. This collection is as extensive as the previous one. There are even First World War motorcycles and a staff car on display. There are several rooms dedicated to firearms, with thousands of rifles, pistols, and machine-guns shown – not to mention the small-bore cannon, Gatling guns, machine-guns, and mortars that line the hallways.

In re-enactment performances each afternoon, the Janissary band Mehter Takimi, the world's oldest military band, gives concerts of martial music, with the musicians dressed in traditional Ottoman Empire uniforms.

The Ottomans were the first to bring musicians on campaign, and to integrate music into the life and work of the army. After a town had been taken, the Mehter preceded the conquering Ottoman commander in a procession through the town, playing slow-cadence marches in exotic minor modes. The boom of kettledrums, invented by the Mehter, the wail of oboes and clash of cymbals, another Turkish invention, was meant to glorify the conquest and impress upon the populace that, whether they liked it or not, they were now part of an entirely different civilisation.

Performances are at 3pm and 4pm daily, and are especially enjoyable for any children you might have with you.

If you do have a chance to get to Istanbul and visit Askeri Müze, plan to be there for several hours – at least three – and if you are a really keen military buff, you could easily do two visits and not be bored. This museum is simply that good.

Left The extensive collections even find room for this deep-sea diving suit.

The Askeri Muze is open from 9am to 5pm every day except Monday, Tuesday and religious holidays. Band performances take place at 3pm and 4pm.

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www.tsk.tr

HELLFIRE PASS: Railway of Death

Neil Howard is touched by a visit to the River Kwai in Thailand, where thousands of PoWs died building a railway track for the Japanese between 1942 and 1943.

Much has been written about the Bridge over the River Kwai. Although the movie distorted the wooden bridge's demise, it successfully captured the cruelty of the Japanese and the suffering of 60,000 Allied prisoners of war. The bridge was a link between China and Burma that was critical for the movement of supplies and troops to the Burma Front. Originally, the Japanese intended to use Asians to construct the railway. In fact, over 200,000 were bribed and conscripted to accomplish the work. However, after the fall of Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia, the Japanese found themselves burdened with thousands of military prisoners. The solution: transport them to work on the Burma Railway in Thailand.

After the Battle of Midway, the Japanese needed an efficient route for transporting troops into Burma. Logistic experts settled on a proposal for rapid completion of the railway. Architects and engineers quickly drew up plans to carry out the work. Two of the most daunting obstacles along the route were the River Kwai and a solid rock barrier in Kanchanaburi, Thailand.

Left A memorial tablet in Hellfire Pass, near its terminus at Kanchanaburi in Thailand.

War-weary workers

Between 1942 and 1943, 60,000 British, Australian, and Dutch prisoners were transferred to work on the railway. Over 13,000 of those prisoners died at the hands of the Japanese. Added to the mix were some 700 US troops, 356 of those Americans did not survive. The number of Asian worker deaths is much more difficult to calculate, but the total is estimated to be well above 100,000.

Forced to work at inhumane speed, on low rations, in oppressive heat, and plagued by disease, prisoners fell at an alarming rate. The dead were often buried where they collapsed. Work on the railway continued for 16 months over the graves of the fallen.

Above A tribute to the Australian prisoners who died while carrying out forced labour at Hellfire Pass.

The project was completed on 17 October 1943, but operated well-below expectations. Only six trains a day made the trip into Burma.

During a recent tour of Thailand in November 2012, I visited the site of the River Kwai Bridge and Hellfire Pass. The iron and concrete bridge still stands as a permanent memorial to the dead. The famous wooden bridge, on the other hand, no longer exists; it had been constructed in haste as a temporary structure before completion of the iron bridge. Neither bridge was built to last. During the Burma Campaign, the Royal Air Force regularly bombed both bridges, but without inflicting permanent damage. The rail line continued to operate until the end of the war in 1945.

Memories of misery

Australian prisoners did much of the work at Hellfire Pass. Today, Australia has preserved the site as a permanent reminder of the horror and cruelty suffered by her sons during WWII. Stepping off the tour bus, I had no idea what to expect. I only knew that Hellfire Pass was listed as a stop along our route. After spending three hours visiting the museum and walking the same ground as the tortured souls responsible for the excavation, I left the site feeling deep sorrow for the victims of the atrocity.

While working my way down 200 steps to view Hellfire Pass, I experienced the effects of heat and humidity. The tour guide informed us that the prisoners used the same steps in 1942. Gulping down half a bottle of water, I quickly realised my discomfort paled in comparison to the pain suffered by the Australians.

Forced to work 16- to 18-hour shifts with insufficient food and water, they laboured with little rest. Many of these men contracted malaria, cholera, and dysentery. Without adequate medical attention, the sick workers died with terrible regularity. Hundreds of other men perished from beatings and Japanese cruelty.

In the jaws of hell

'Konyu Cutting', as the Japanese called the location, was a major obstacle in completing the railway. Without modern excavating equipment and explosives, the work was done by starving men using eight-pound hammers, steel tap-drills, shovels, and picks. Crushed rock was removed by hand in baskets and rice sacks hung on poles.

Feeling pressure from the Japanese hierarchy to complete the project in short order, guards pressed their charges to work far into the night. After darkness fell, lighted torches were placed above the workers to illuminate the site. Looking up, some of the prisoners remarked they were in the 'jaws of hell'. Others dubbed the place 'Hellfire Pass'.

The pass required the prisoners to cut through limestone and quartz 70 feet deep, 20 feet wide at the bottom, and 300 feet in length. During July to October 1943, the infamous 'speedo' period, work on the pass greatly accelerated. Workers toiled around the clock: 62 hours of work out of a 72-hour period is the longest documented shift. The project was completed in an astonishing 12 weeks. The price in suffering and death is incalculable.

As I entered the pass, I felt crushed rock under my feet. To the left, someone had placed an altar lined with a row of small crosses. Above the altar flew a little Australian flag. Moving through the pass, I took note of cuts into the rock and marks made by the drills. At one point, I observed a broken drill bit forever locked in the stone. Most of the track has been removed, but a small section remains as a reminder of the railway. Although no longer used, Hellfire Pass will forever stand as a testament to human cruelty.

The Australian Government has made great efforts to preserve the memory of Hellfire Pass. The Australian-Thai Chamber of Commerce first dedicated the memorial site on 25 April 1987.

On 24 April 1996, the Hellfire Pass Memorial Museum was opened to exhibit artefacts from the period and to reveal the true story about the construction of the railway. A large marble marker commemorates the survivors and the dead. A pottery bowl filled with water and orchids was crafted by one of the survivors to honour his fallen comrades.

As I departed the museum for the tour bus, I was struck by the thought, 'never again'. Hellfire Pass will remain in my memory forever. ★

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All historical facts and figures in this article are from the Hellfire Pass Memorial Museum.

HELLFIRE PASS MEMORIAL MUSEUM

The museum was opened by the then Australian Prime Minister on 24 April 1998. Open daily from 9am-4pm, the site is a must for anyone with an interest in the Second World War visiting the Kanchanaburi area. Entrance to the museum is free.

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JANUARY 2013

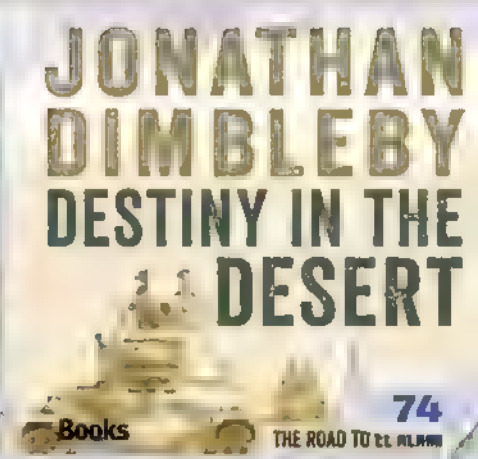
MHM Reviews

DVD TV BOOKS

January Jonathan Dimbleby's new book on the WWII North Africa Campaign, *Destiny in the Desert: the road to El Alamein – the battle that turned the tide*, is reviewed by Mark Corby for our lead review this month. Ian F W Beckett's *The Making of the First World War* and Peter Hawthorne's *The Animal Victoria Cross* also feature.

The Military History Channel celebrates Australia's key role in both World Wars for Australia Day (26 January) with a series of special programmes recalling the nation's involvement. The 27 January is another day of remembrance on Military History, when they will be marking Holocaust Memorial Day with a collection of programmes examining the war-time atrocity.

Rule Britannia is our DVD this month: a large box-set covering the history of Britain from the reign of Queen Victoria up to the Falklands War.



DVD

RULE BRITANNIA

GO ENTERTAIN
29 OCTOBER 2012
£48.99

A number of these vast DVD box-sets have started to emerge in the run-up to Christmas, some questionable, others well worth the 12 hours' dedication required to make your way through them. First impressions indicated that *Rule Britannia* would fall into the latter category.

Taking full advantage of this year of pageantry and patriotism, the box-set focuses on the last century of British history, from the reign of Queen Victoria, through both World Wars, the Falklands, and right up to the Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

There is nothing ground-breaking about the approach. Newsreel footage of a Luftwaffe-ravaged London is shown along with 1940s clipped-English commentary which blends seamlessly into modern narration. It is exactly the sort of documentary style favoured by BBC4 and the Yesterday channel. But it works. This familiar approach, pioneered by programmes like *The Word at War*, is tried and tested: traditional, informative, and not too slow-paced.

One hurdle this type of documentary must surmount is how to keep material that has been covered before interesting without doing anything too radical. *Rule Britannia* overcomes this obstacle successfully on the whole. There are moments when one's attention does waver slightly, depending on personal taste. For me, the two-disk special dealing with '50 Events that Changed Britain' could have been omitted entirely. But then the coverage of the Falklands was better than many programmes I have seen on the subject. So there is certainly something for everyone here.

Particularly interesting are the first DVDs, especially 'Life in Victorian Britain'. The strength of this box-set is its size and the length of time it covers. Through the changes of style in each disk we get a feel for the monumental changes Britain has undergone in a mere 100 years, and how great events have shaped her evolution.

Military focus is well distributed throughout the box-set. As such, there is never too much of a long run without there being at least some military reference. You can rest assured that if you are bored by The Beatles or footage of steam trains, the military core of the programme will soon re-emerge.

This is not a military history of Britain, but there is enough here to keep fans of military history happy for the duration.

ONES TO WATCH

THE NAZIS: ONE PEOPLE, ONE REICH, ONE FÜHRER, £9.99
This amazing three-DVD box-set focuses on the rise and fall of Nazis. In 'The Night of the Long Knives', we see what happened on 30 June 1934 as Hitler murdered his way to dictatorship. In 'The Rise', he uses his power to take control of Germany, and we see how he mesmerised and terrified those around him. Then in 'The Fall', we are given a revealing perspective on the reality of German life under the Nazis, as Hitler forged an era of prosperity before destruction took hold. *Out now from Amazon.co.uk*

WORLD WAR II IN COLOUR, £10.75
The award-winning documentary *World War II in Colour* is a spectacular display of sights, sounds, and memories. At its core, the Second World War was a black-and-white struggle between good and evil. But the everyday scenes of carnage, human resistance, and savage warfare were much more complex. An assemblage of colour footage and photographs from national archives and private collections, *World War II in Colour* delivers striking perspectives on the soldiers' day-to-day experiences from every imaginable angle. *Out now from Amazon.co.uk*

DEATH ON THE EASTERN FRONT: BEHIND THE RUSSIAN BATTLES OF WWII, £12.99
This six-DVD box-set deals with all the major battles on the Eastern Front, from Kursk to Leningrad. Taking us through the more famous battles, such as Stalingrad, this informative documentary set also covers new ground, touching on the many unanswered questions surrounding the blockaded city of Leningrad. Also covered are the 'Last Battle with the Third Reich' in Prague 1945, and the truth behind what would become the symbolic Elbe Day. *Out now from Amazon.co.uk*

WWI: THE BLOODY WAR, £17.99
Although previously released as separate DVDs, this 90th anniversary edition of *WWI: the bloody war* houses all eight DVDs in one special box-set. The series explores the perilous conflicts and critical battles of the First World War. With fascinating historical analysis from expert historians and gripping first-hand accounts from First World War veterans, this exhaustive collection is the definitive chronicle of one of history's bloodiest wars. *Out now from Amazon.co.uk*

TV HIGHLIGHTS
ON MILITARY HISTORY
Sky 531 Virgin Media 236

AUSTRALIA DAY
26 January, between 7pm and 10.30pm

Although not traditionally considered a major military power, Australia played a significant role in both world wars. In a series of special programmes this Australia Day, MILITARY HISTORY will remember the nation's often unrecognised involvement in these great conflicts. 'The Bombing of Darwin: an awkward truth' recalls when, on 19 February 1942, Japanese forces bombed the Port of Darwin – an attack which represented Australia's first 'physical contact with the war'. 'Gallipoli from Above: the untold story' examines an ambitious Australian operation in 1915, aiming to land 20,000 ANZAC troops on a heavily defended and hostile Turkish shore.

The two-part documentary 'The Bloody Trail: Kokoda 1942' tells of the savage military campaign fought by Australian forces as part of a desperate struggle to keep Papua New Guinea from falling to the Japanese during the darkest days of WWII.

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY
27 January, between 7pm and 11pm

Marking Holocaust Memorial Day this January, MILITARY HISTORY will be airing an evening of special shows examining the horrific atrocities committed by the Nazis during World War II, and honouring the victims of their unthinkable crimes. 'Auschwitz: journey to Hell' is a unique 'virtual tour' of the most infamous Nazi death camp of the war. 'Hitler on Trial' reveals the little-known story of Hans Litten, a young Jewish lawyer who in 1931 put Adolf Hitler on the witness stand in a German court in an attempt to reveal his true character and intentions to the general public. Completing the evening's special programming is 'Auschwitz: the forgotten evidence', which asks the uncomfortable questions 'When did the Allies find out about the Nazi extermination camps?' and, most importantly, 'What could they have done to stop the killing?'

DMZ (DEMILITARIZED ZONE)
Weeknights throughout January, between 4pm and 8pm

Focusing on investigation, intrigue, and exploration, *DMZ* brings some of HISTORY's most fascinating and entertaining shows to MILITARY HISTORY. 'Secrets in the Dust' investigates the practice of archaeology through an examination of great discoveries like Machu Picchu and the tombs of the pharaohs. 'Ancient Discoveries' explores ancient inventions and engineering triumphs previously believed to have been created only in modern times. 'Treasure Houses of Britain' reveals some of Britain's finest stately homes, while 'UFO Files' examines the facts and myths surrounding UFO sightings in every corner of the world.

THEATRE OF WAR
First three Saturdays of January, 10pm

In this series of two-hour specials, MILITARY HISTORY takes a detailed look at some of the defining moments of the Second World War. 'Double Victory' spotlights the historic role of the Tuskegee Airmen during the war, revealing how these African-Americans bravely fought both against fascism overseas and for racial justice at home. The two-hour special 'WWII: lost films – air war' follows five veterans on some of the most dangerous, deadly, and visually stunning aerial missions of the war. Finally, 'Soldiers Stories' tells of the Troubles in Northern Ireland from the perspective of the British soldiers who served there.

BOOKS

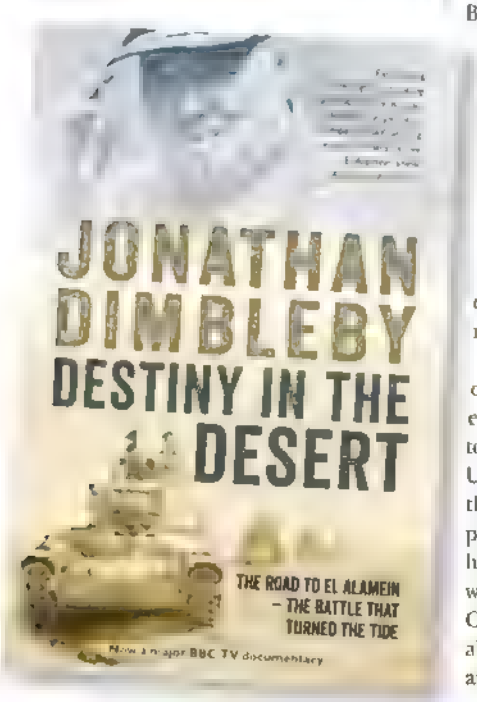
DESTINY IN THE DESERT: the road to El Alamein – the battle that turned the tide

Jonathan Dimbleby
Profile Books, £25
ISBN 978-1846684449

This book is Jonathan Dimbleby's first foray into the world of military history. He has chosen to focus on one of the most controversial campaigns of the Second World War. Over a period of nearly three years, the British Empire devoted enormous resources in men and *materiel* to trying to destroy a miniscule German Army – the renowned Deutsches Afrikakorps (DAK), commanded by the redoubtable Erwin Rommel.

So inept was the British performance that as far back as 1960 Correlli Barnett wrote a scathing polemic innocuously entitled *The Desert Generals*. Thanks finally to massive American financial and military intervention, and the debateable talents of Bernard Montgomery, victory was achieved over the German interloper.

Dimbleby writes with an engaging style and adopts an investigative approach as he reviews the 'big picture' of both political and military events. This overview is perfect for any reader new to the subject, but military pedants will notice a few simple mistakes and also find this work short on the sort of technical detail they normally crave.



Dimbleby is an unashamed supporter of the Churchillian 'soft underbelly' strategy, and thus regards the Battle of El Alamein as the much-heralded battle 'that turned the tide'. Many today regard this as Churchillian hubris and nonsense, and regard the whole North African adventure as an expensive waste of time and effort. Most would argue that 'the tide' was not and could not have been turned in Africa, and that it was in reality turned in Russia with the failure of Operation Barbarossa in December 1941. Readers will be struck by the incessant meddling, blatant incompetence, and emotional vindictiveness of Churchill, despite Dimbleby's sympathetic portrayal of the great man.

The main problem facing the British, as Dimbleby freely admits, was that the DAK was so much better trained. Rather than being goose-stepping automatons of British press parodies, their doctrine of *Aufstragstaktik* (command and control) gave them an enormous advantage over the hidebound, inflexible British. The German idea of mission (*Auftrag*) had no parallel in the British Army, with calamitous results. Thus a tiny German force, 'shackled' as it was to the corpse of the almost worthless Italian army, was able to outwit and outfight a series of British generals, much to the disgust of Churchill.

As if this were not enough, for most of the campaign the DAK was better equipped than the British and was able to adapt far better to desert conditions. Unfortunately, the opening phase of the campaign, when the British were pitted against the shambolic Italians, had generated a false sense of optimism, with the result that General Richard O'Connor, in a masterly campaign, was able to throw them back some 500 miles and herd in 130,000 prisoners.

> Most would argue that 'the tide' was not turned in Africa, and that it was in reality turned in Russia with the failure of Barbarossa.

The arrival of Rommel and the DAK in early 1941 transformed the situation, and over the next two years a succession of British commanders – Ritchie, Cunningham, Wavell, Auchinleck – were dismissed for failing to destroy 'the Desert Fox'. The final disaster, which drove Churchill incandescent with rage, and elicited the infamous remark 'Haven't we got a single general who can even win one battle?', was the fall of Tobruk, with the loss of 25,000 men, in June 1942.

Fortunately, relief was at hand in the form of Bernard Montgomery – not Churchill's first choice, but ultimately the man who defeated Rommel by the very simple expedient of massively outnumbering him in tanks, guns, aircraft, and men – the essential basis of the El Alamein victory in November 1942.

Despite this, Dimbleby, like many others, is unimpressed by Montgomery, finding him 'pathologically egotistical' and prone to spite and mendacity. The controversy over the impact of Operation Torch, the near-simultaneous landing of 100,000 Allied troops 1,500 miles behind Rommel in Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, is dismissed by Dimbleby as a case of being wise after the event.

This book, which contains much original thinking, is a splendid introduction to the controversy over the North African adventure.

Mark Corby

The Making of the First World War

Ian F W Beckett
Yale University Press, £18 99
ISBN 978-0300162028

Millions of words have been written about the theatres, battles, and commanders of the First World War. Ian Beckett, however, has written a book which presents 12 vignettes of unique situations that happened during the war, describing the cause and effect of each occurrence. These are not confined to specific battles or campaigns, but relate more generally to the effect that the war had on the countries concerned.

The vignettes are almost monologues which introduce the *dramatis personae* of the First World War. Not generals or admirals, but the kings and politicians whose greed, ineptitude, or political ambition took their respective countries to war. There are 12 chapters, more or less chronologically following the course of the war, and focusing on aspects that are not normally raised in conventional histories. One major flaw, though, instantly noticeable, was the total lack of maps!

The chapters tell us of actions such as the flooding of the Belgian polder areas, which prevented the Channel ports from falling into German hands. There is the story of how the Russians slipped almost lazily into revolution, and of how the Austro-Hungarian Empire collapsed, setting the scene for Europe for decades to come.

There is a study of David Lloyd George, and how he used his remarkable talents to turn the British munitions industry around. In doing so, he changed the way the government worked, bringing in businessmen to run government departments rather than the civil servants. We are also given an insight into the career of President Woodrow Wilson, who, through naive liberalism, tried to impose his ideals on post-war Europe – and was largely ignored.

Beckett shows how the Gallipoli campaign changed Australia: how one campaign and the propaganda surrounding it forged Australia as a nation in its own right. Another chapter deals with how the Arab nations were dealt with, and what happened to the promises they were made on the condition that they fought the Turks – decisions and broken promises which to this day shape the lives of millions of people.

The book begins with the flooding of the Yser area to stop the Germans on the Allies' coastal flank, and ends with a study of the German offensive at Lys in April 1918. The latter effectively portrays Erich Ludendorff as a flawed strategist whose campaigns effectively ended any chance of Germany winning the war. In between are chapters about unrestricted submarine warfare and the introduction of aerial bombing.

Professor Beckett has done an excellent job in bringing together these 12 events, all totally separate and seemingly unrelated, yet which moulded the course of the First World War and set the scene for the world for the next two decades.

Andy Kay

The Secret Listeners: how the Y Service intercepted the secret German codes for Bletchley Park

Sinclair McKay
Aurum Press, £20
ISBN 978-1845137632

Do we need another book on Bletchley Park? Amazon lists 122 titles on the code-breaking centre. Of course, the answer is yes so long as there is something new to say. Sinclair McKay here proves that there is.

The Secret Listeners tells the story of the front-line of the signals intelligence war, the men and women who spent their war sitting in huts dotted around the countryside, tuning in to various radio frequencies and noting down exactly what they heard. These were the men and women of the Y Service – the wireless interception division, the Listening Service, the forerunners of GCHQ. There could be no code-breaking without the Y Service first intercepting the enemy's signals.

And what a group they were. There were the technophiles, often amateur radio hams, boys barely out of school, like Ray Fautley, who started work in his parents' front room. And there were the linguists, often young women who had spent a summer in Germany before the war and who were recruited because of their fluency in German, even if the selection was not always rigorous. Elizabeth Marshall met a man at the Admiralty who asked '*Können Sie Deutsch sprechen?*', to which she replied '*Ja, ich kann ganz gut Deutsch sprechen*'. The naval officer responded 'You'll do' and she was in.

The Y Service was needed wherever the war went. So there were listening centres in requisitioned country houses like Beaumanor Hall in Leicestershire or Whaddon Hall in Bedfordshire, in the old naval fort at Chatham, at Scarborough, and on the Dorset coast. The RAF opened a listening post in 1940 at Chicksands Priory; it is still a major intelligence centre today. Then there were postings all around the world, to Cairo, Karachi, and Malta. Here there were new things to worry about, like the intense heat, the monsoon rains, snakes, and scorpions.

The shifts were usually 12 hours long, and they were either manically intense, requiring supreme levels of concentration to keep up accurate high-speed translating of morse code, or painfully boring if no signals were picked up. But if the Y Service worked hard, they seem to have played hard as well. Wherever a group gathered, there were dances, parties, and wild evenings on the town. But like the code-breakers, whom Churchill described as 'the geese that never cackled', none of the wireless operators ever told even their family what they were up to.

McKay's story of the wireless interceptors is one of willing amateurs and gifted eccentrics, of patience, accuracy, and endurance. It is a story of people who played a vital role in the war but who rarely talked about it and never sought praise for their painstaking work. It was all very British.

My biggest quibble with the book is with McKay's endnotes. He has interviewed many veterans, but the other source notes are minimal. Apart from a few memoirs noted without page references, the notes tell the reader almost nothing about where the documentary information in the book is located. To say that someone's memoirs 'can be found in the Imperial War Museum's collections' is supremely vague.

The implication is that McKay does not want to reveal the sources he used, and that is bound to raise questions. It is a shame, because this is a fine book with a genuinely new angle on a familiar topic, full of vivid and fascinating characters.

Taylor Downing

ON THE HORIZON

Special Forces Sniper Skills
Robert Stirling
Osprey, £18.99
ISBN 978-1780960036

A hard-hitting account of the men, weapons, and techniques used to eliminate high-value targets on the battlefield. Well-illustrated with photographs of every aspect of the sniper's trade.

Warsaw 1944: an insurgent's journal of the uprising
Zbigniew Czajkowski
Pen & Sword, £19.99
ISBN 978 1781590584

A rare account of the gallant but doomed 1944 Warsaw Uprising, written shortly after the event and never before published in English.

Churchill and Company: allies and rivals in war and peace
David Dilks
IB Tauris, £20
ISBN 978 1848857186

David Dilks presents Churchill not just as a wartime leader and international statesman, but as a private individual with a wide variety of friendships and rivalries. New light is also shed on his WWI career

US Eighth Air Force in Europe: going over, gaining strength
Martin W Bowman
Pen & Sword, £19.99
ISBN 978-1848847491

Using narrative accounts and providing new insights, Bowman tells the story of America's first encounters with the Luftwaffe, heavy Nazi air defences, and the wartime strictures that Britain had already endured for three years.

The Fear in the Sky: vivid memories of operational aircrew in World War II
Pat Cunningham
Pen & Sword, £19.99
ISBN 978-1848846487

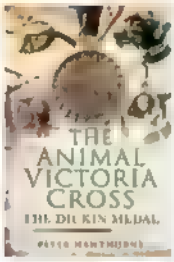
Aviation historian Cunningham records the experiences of ten men who volunteered to risk their lives on air operations – for some time Britain's only effective method of striking back.

Wartime on the Railways
David Wragg
The History Press, £12.99
ISBN 978-0752486123

Describing the part played by Britain's railways during the Second World War, Wragg deals not only with operational matters and the impact of enemy action, but the role of railway workshops in producing military equipment.

The Animal Victoria Cross

Peter Hawthorne
Pen & Sword, £16.99
ISBN 978-1781590423



Maria Dickin was a well-to-do social worker who spent years in close contact with destitute people in London's East End As an animal lover, she was appalled to observe the suffering of dogs and cats, as well as the human residents of that poverty-stricken part of London. At the height of the First World War, she set up the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA) in a Whitechapel basement, and within hours it was overwhelmed with clients bringing their ailing pets for treatment.

In the next war, in 1943, with the enlistment of thousands of horses, donkeys, dogs, and even pigeons into the armed forces, Maria decided to honour the heroic achievements of these animals on the battlefield by establishing the Dickin Medal, the highest award for animal bravery and the animal equivalent of the Victoria Cross.

Peter Hawthorne's short book tells the story of some of the 63 animals that to date have won the Dickin Medal. We meet Winkie the pigeon, who in 1943 was aboard a Beaufort RAF bomber that crashed into the North Sea 100 miles from its base. The crew thrust Winkie into the air as their only hope of attracting a rescue party. The next day she made it to RAF Deuchars in Fife, and her markings told the rescuers where to search for the crew. The effort and exhaustion of her flight left her with a permanent blinking in one eye, hence the name 'Winkie'.

Dog-lovers will struggle to stifle a sob when reading the story of Ricky (yes, there is a photo), the Welsh Sheepdog, who suffered head injuries and damaged hearing in Holland in 1944 when helping a section of troops to safety after a mine blast had killed their commander. We also meet Judy the pointer, the only animal registered as a prisoner of war, who returned from captivity to have her bark recorded on BBC radio.

The rest of these touching and inspiring exploits, from the Blitz to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, comprise a delightful collection of vignettes telling a little-known story of animal devotion and heroism.

Jules Stewart

Unearthing Churchill's Secret Army

John Grehan and Martin Mace
Pen & Sword Military, £25
978-1848847941

Unearthing Churchill's Secret Army documents what happened to the members of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) who died in action. While the activities of the SOE are well documented, the fate of those operatives who did not return from missions is, with a few notable exceptions, obscure.

This book is the result of years of painstaking research by authors John Grehan and Martin Mace. Using Flight Officer Vera Atkin's post-war research as a foundation, the authors have utilised the batches of SOE files released by the National Archives from 2003 onwards to tell the individual stories of those members of the SOE killed in action or captured, usually tortured, and then executed.

The book focuses on the 140 SOE agents officially listed as killed in action, recording their service, awards, deaths, and the memorials on which they are commemorated.

The book goes on to catalogue the names of a further 330 agents who died on active service, but, for various reasons, are not recorded as SOE by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Most were executed, but some died in the air, some took cyanide rather than be captured, and some fell in combat with the enemy. The bodies of many of the lost agents were never found (only 33 of them have known graves).

There are a number of things that stand out. First, the ruthless efficiency of the German security forces is in stark contrast to the apparent ineptitude of the *Abwehr* as related in such recent books as *Operation Fortitude* and *Double Cross*. Then there is the number of those featured who made daring escapes from Nazi-occupied Europe, and then volunteered to return. Finally, something I did find intriguing is the fact that of the 140 deaths, no less than 30 of them occurred in September 1944.

This is more than just a book. It is an epitaph to the men and women who died in the service of the SOE, and is a worthy tribute to their bravery and self-sacrifice.

David Flintham

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- Back to the Drawing Board

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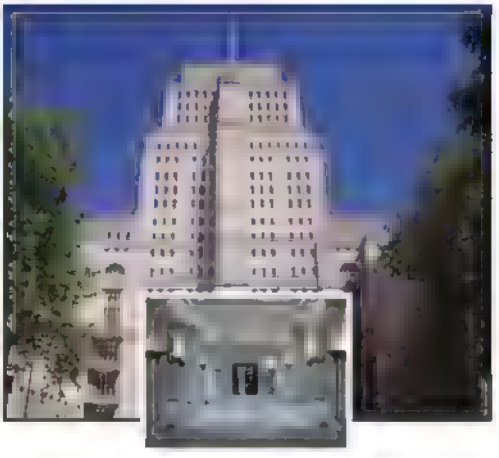


WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

COMPETITION

MILITARY HISTORY MONTHLY

Take the MHM quiz for your chance to WIN

This month we have 3 copies of *COMING HOME* AND *THE REICHSBANK ROBBERY* to be won!

To be in with a chance of winning, simply visit ***www.military-history.org*** and answer the following questions:

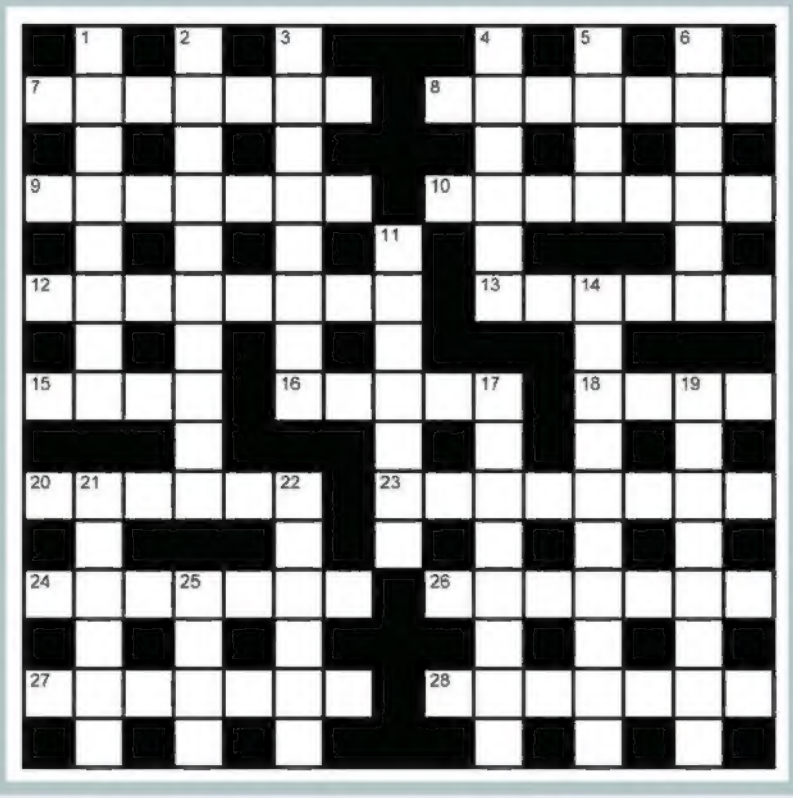
1. When was the *Reichsbank* founded?
2. Where was the famous German salt mine in which much of the transferred Nazi gold was stashed?
3. Which year will mark the centenary of the First World War?

TO ENTER THE QUIZ go to *www.military-history.org*

To mark the launch of Pen & Sword's new historical fiction imprint Claymore Press, we are giving you the chance to win one of each of these gripping new titles.

Coming Home by Roy E Stolworthy tells the story of 15-year-old Thomas Elkin as he engages in the turmoil of the First World War. A tale of conflict, both global and personal, and of redemption, this is a novel that has the potential to rank alongside the best of retrospective First World War literature.

In *The Reichsbank Robbery*, Colin Roderick Fulton weaves a plot around the theft of part of the vast fortune that had to be shifted from the *Reichsbank* following its ruthless bombardment by the US Air Force in 1945. The story follows the secret German squadron KG200 that flew captured Allied aircraft, renegade Russian soldiers, and a group of desperate Germans, all anxious to escape the collapsing Third Reich.



MHM CROSSWORD

Test your military history knowledge in our new regular crossword. The answers will be revealed in next month's issue of *MHM*.

ACROSS

7 Kingdom which fought the Romans at the Battle of Carrhae in 53 BC (7)
8 A sergeant has three of these (7)
9 ___ Wars. Three separate conflicts fought in Spain from 1834 to 1876 (7)
10 Corps of the British army whose motto was *Labor Omnia Vincit* (7)
12 Traditional dance for sailors (8)
13 Soldier or police officer in East Africa (6)
15 Wolf's ___. Hitler's bunker, where he survived an assassination attempt in July 1944 (4)
16 Old term for an Indian soldier serving Great Britain or another European power (5)
18 ___ Tetsutaro. Japanese admiral, an opponent of the Washington Naval Treaty (4)
20 Aircraft such as the Hengist and the Horsa (6)
23 Country in which the Selous Scouts were formed in 1973 (8)
24 Armour covering the front of the torso, sometimes with a piece to protect the back (7)
26 Aircraft known informally as the Jump Jet (7)
27 Hairstyle discontinued by the British Army in 1808 (7)
28 Castle captured by Parliamentarian forces in January 1644 (7)

DOWN

1 Site of two battles of the American War of Independence, fought in September and October 1777 (8)
2 City where the German 6th Army surrendered on 2 February 1943 (10)
3 Craft first used in a bombing raid against Britain on 19 January 1915 (8)
4 Barbarian leader defeated at the Battle of Chalons in 451 AD (6)
5 Battlecruiser which served as Beatty's flagship at the Battle of Jutland (4)
6 Jet fighter built by Gloster, first used operationally against V-1 flying bombs (6)
11 German tank first produced in the mid-1960s by Krauss-Maffei (7)
14 Luftwaffe commander and field-marshal, commander-in-chief in Italy in 1941 (10)
17 Originally a volunteer cavalry force, raised during the Napoleonic Wars (8)
19 Ancient galleys with three tiers of oars (8)
21 Surname of actor who played Private Frazer in *Dad's Army* (6)
22 Country which gained territory from Sweden at the end of the Great Northern War (6)
25 Desert ___, nickname of the 7th Armoured Division (4)

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Now you can have your opinions on everything *MHM* heard online as well as in print. Follow us on **Twitter@ MilHistMonthly**, or take a look at our Facebook page for daily news, books, and article updates at **www.facebook.com/MilitaryHistoryMonthly**.

Think you have spotted an error? Disagree with a viewpoint? Enjoying the mag? Visit **www.military-history.org** to post your comments on a wide range of different articles. Alternatively send an email to *feedback@military-history.org*.

ADD US NOW and have your say

CAPTION COMPETITION

We continue our online caption competition with an image from 'War Culture'. Pit your wit against *MHM* readers at **www.military-history.org/competitions**.

WINNER:

Have a word with your tailor, Fotheringay – he made my breeches so tight, my head exploded!
Yvonne

RUNNERS-UP:

Don't wave it around in public.
Catherine Warr

And that's how I save 20 minutes shaving every morning!
Philip Williams

Think you can do better?
Log onto ***www.military-history.org/competitions*** to enter the next CAPTION COMPETITION. Flex your funny bone and be in with a chance of getting your caption published in the next issue of *Military History Monthly*!

ANSWERS **DECEMBER ISSUE | MHM27**

ACROSS 7 Yerevan, 8 Algiers, 10 Appomattox, 11 Sikh, 12 Lille, 13 Transport, 16 *War and Peace*, 19 Innsbruck, 20 Shako, 22 *MASH*, 24 Abyssinian, 25 Bazooka, 26 Locamo. **DOWN** 1 Leipzig, 2 New Orleans, 3 Paras, 4 Alexander, 5 Wins, 6 Ankara, 9 Pterodactyl, 14 Pocahontas, 15 Fairbanks, 17 Andaman, 18 Ukraine, 21 Ascot, 23 Hook.

The SM-62 'Snark'

Above Aerial photo showing the Snark's upturned nose during level flight.

The English language changed drastically during the Swinging Sixties. 'Cool' suddenly meant fashionable or aloof, to 'dig' something was to enjoy it, and a Snark – once the sinister subject of Lewis Carroll's poem 'The Hunting of the Snark' – was now an intercontinental cruise missile capable of carrying a W39 thermonuclear warhead.

Proposed as a Soviet deterrent in 1961, work on the Snark had actually begun in 1946. It was designed to be roughly the same size as a modern fighter jet, and was fitted with a turbojet engine, two rocket boosters, and a complex guidance system. The planned due date originally given for a finished product sailed by in 1953, with the design still in development and the Strategic Air Command's patience wearing thin. Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) became the focus of President Eisenhower and his weapons developers.

Engineers worked as best they could with the design. Because the Snark lacked a horizontal tail, it used elevons as its aircraft control surfaces, and flew with a strange-looking nose-high angle during level flight. As it approached its target, the nuclear warhead would have separated from its fuselage and then followed a ballistic trajectory towards the target. This separation would have caused a sudden shift in centres of gravity, and the fuselage would have abruptly pitched up in order to avoid a collision with the warhead. Theoretically.

In 1957, the first test finally got under way. Results confirmed Eisenhower's scepticism, showing the Snark's accuracy to be out by 17 nautical miles. Next year, with an improved celestial navigation system, accuracy was improved, the Snark falling a mere four nautical miles short of target. This, as you can imagine, was still not enough to convince the head honchos. All they saw was a notoriously unreliable and inaccurate missile which, on the majority of its test flights, suffered serious technical failures thousands of miles before it reached its target. In fact, the missile crashed so often that the Atlantic Ocean near Cape Canaveral where the missile was being tested became known as 'Snark-infested waters'.

> The missile crashed so often that the Atlantic Ocean near the testing ground became known as 'Snark-infested waters'.

Despite the mishaps and set-backs, engineering work on the Snark doggedly continued. On 27 May 1959, Presque Isle Air Force Base received its first missile. Ten months later, on 18 March 1960, a Snark missile was put on alert status. The 702nd Strategic Missile Wing – the only Snark Missile wing in the USAF – was declared operational on February 1961. Perhaps at last people were starting to take the Snark seriously?

Perhaps. But one rather important man could not see any potential in the Snark, describing it only a month later, in March 1961, as 'obsolete and of marginal military value'. That man was President John F Kennedy and, in June that year, Kennedy's opinions led to 702nd Wing being closed and all further work on the Snark being terminated.

Below The test launch of a Snark missile.

THOMAS GUNN

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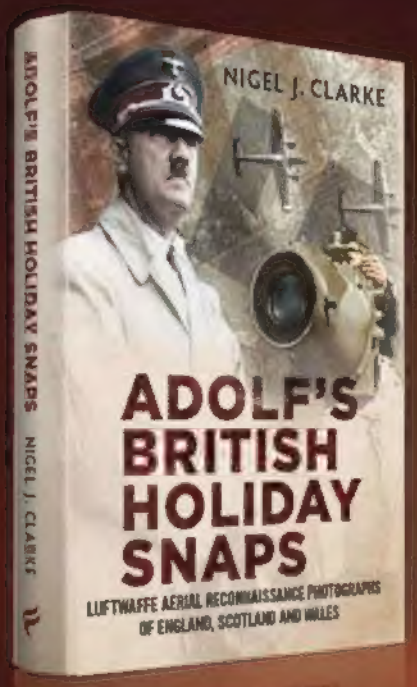
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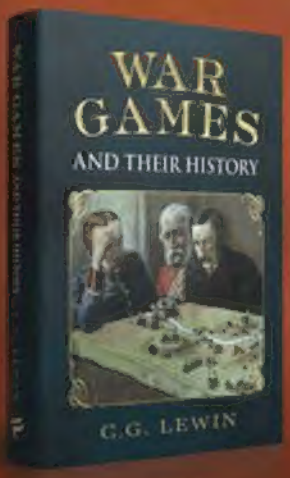

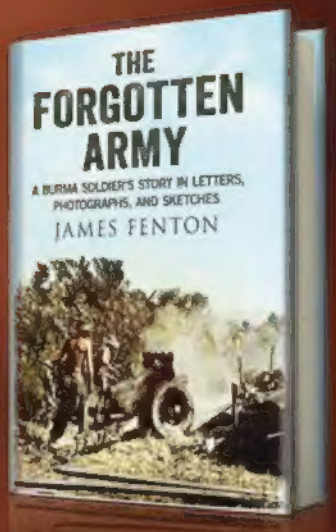

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